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★ Second Series ★

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AMERICAN STATESMEN

SECOND SERIES

James G. Blaine

JAMES GILLESPIE BLAINE

BY

EDWARD STANWOOD
LITT. D. (BOWDOIN)

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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Published October, 1905

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JAMES G. BLAINE

I

INTRODUCTORY

No man who has borne a conspicuous part in the political history of the United States had a personality more interesting than that of James G. Blaine. He possessed all the qualities that draw men to a political leader: a keen, active mind, well-trained by early education and ripened by long experience; a strong and comprehensive grasp of public questions; unwavering devotion to principles espoused in boyhood and held to the last; great skill in the selection of points of attack and defence in political controversy, and in the management of a canvass; remarkable facility in putting in popular form his arguments upon a question at issue, supplemented by extraordinary readiness in off-hand debate.

The traits enumerated excite admiration for him who possesses them, and inspire confidence in him. They do not account for the intense devotion of Mr. Blaine's supporters, not merely to the cause which he might be upholding, nor even to his political and personal fortunes, but to the

man himself. There have been two or three men in the higher ranks of American politics who have won the affection as well as the admiration of a vast army of followers, but surely no one to a greater degree or in larger numbers than Mr. Blaine. His fine bodily presence, his charming personal manners, his marvellous memory of names and faces, and his power to make friends of almost all whom he met, — even those who disagreed with him radically, — these things may be assigned as a sufficient explanation of his wonderful popularity with his close associates; and this personal magnetism was communicated indirectly by a force and through a medium which students of psychology must explain, to men who never met, who never even saw him. Moreover, there was a dash and a fire in his bearing and in his conduct of a controversy that captivated his countrymen, and that gave appropriateness to the designation "a plumed knight."

It may be questioned if the career of any American public man is more worthy than his to be studied, either for the bare interest of the narrative or for the light which the study may cast upon the political life of the time. It was a career of singular contrasts, — of brilliant successes, and of failures which were almost as striking because they came so near to success; of extraordinary popularity, and of opposition both in kind and

in degree such as no other public man in this country has encountered. It was a career which is aptly and truly described by the word dramatic. Consider the many and startling fluctuations in his fortunes, the sudden changes produced by occurrences seemingly trivial, and the numerous occasions in his life when he appeared as the central figure in a scene which the whole country watched with breathless attention, and one is reminded irresistibly of the development of the plot of a powerful drama. Hostile or superficial critics might plausibly add to the many accusations against him, a charge that these incidents, some of them almost sensational in their character, were carefully planned by him and studied in advance, were it not true that each one of them was a result of occurrences that could not have been anticipated long enough before the scene itself to enable the most ingenious playwright to contrive it.

To the student of political history the career of Mr. Blaine offers many interesting problems, some of which must be left for the historians of another generation. That which will engage the most attention is the question as to the truth or falsity of the charges against his personal character which formed the basis of implacable hostility to him on the part of many estimable and high-minded men. It is a question upon

which full agreement is never reached in the case of any man who has been the object of violent controversy, because it is difficult to approach the subject without a strong prejudice on one side or the other. The opinion of the present writer will undoubtedly be regarded as too much biassed by personal friendship to be accepted. That, however, is not a sufficient reason why the opinion should be withheld. It is, that by exaggeration, distortion, and misplacement of facts, one series of acts, in which Mr. Blaine was not wholly free from blame, was made to seem the conduct of a person destitute of moral character; and thereafter, upon the principle *ab uno disce omnes*, every subsequent act was interpreted as springing from the base motives which alone such a person could harbor. On the contrary, thousands upon thousands of men who knew him, and hundreds at least who knew him intimately, are sure that the judgment is harsh and untrue, that throughout his career he was actuated by high motives, that he was inspired by a lofty patriotism, and that both in his public and his private life he was obedient to the promptings of a sensitive conscience.

The grievous opposition which he met in consequence of the misconception of his character by a small minority of his own party was not the sole cause, but it was one of the causes, of his

defeat in the one contest that would probably have enabled an unprejudiced biographer, could such be found, to pass a final and conclusive judgment upon his quality as a man and as a statesman. Not that it is necessary that every politician shall have filled the office of President before one can know what manner of man he is. But Mr. Blaine was so great a man, so prominent as a leader, so prolific of ideas, so broad-minded and far-seeing, that no place except the highest offered an opportunity for the free play of all his powers. Men may differ, they do differ, upon the questions whether his ideas were wise, whether his purposes were expedient, whether his methods were safe; but millions of his countrymen regret that he was not allowed the opportunity to prove that their judgment upon him was correct.

II

LINEAGE, EDUCATION, AND EARLY MANHOOD

James Gillespie Blaine was born at West Brownsville, Washington County, Pennsylvania, on Sunday morning, January 31, 1830. He was the second son of Maria Louise (Gillespie), and Ephraim Lyon Blaine, — one of a numerous family of sons and daughters, some of whom died in infancy.

His ancestors on both his father's and his mother's side came to this country from Ireland. His great-great-grandfather, James Blaine, one of the sturdy Presbyterian Scotch-Irish race, emigrated from Londonderry in 1745, and settled first at Donegal, in Westmoreland County. He afterward removed to Toboyne, then in Cumberland, now in Perry County, where he had a fine estate on the banks of the Juniata.

Ephraim, the eldest of his nine children, was born in 1741, before the removal to America. In his early manhood he served in Pontiac's war. In 1771 he became sheriff of Cumberland County. When the relations between England and its colonies warned the people to prepare for

defence, Ephraim Blaine, as well as his father, was strongly on the side of the colonists. He was, in December, 1775, designated as colonel of a battalion of Cumberland County militia. But his business ability, which had already made him one of the wealthiest men in western Pennsylvania, led to his appointment successively as commissary of provisions, deputy commissary general, and finally, on the direct recommendation of General Washington, commissary general of purchases for the northern department. He held this position until the end of the war. His services were of incalculable value to the cause of independence. For a great part of the time his duties included the raising of money to pay for the goods which nominally it was his business only to buy. He advanced largely from his own means to promote the cause. To his energy and persuasive power Washington's army owed it that the distress at Valley Forge was not even greater than it was.

Colonel Blaine removed to Carlisle in 1764, and in June of the next year married Rebecca Galbraith, who was like himself of Scotch-Irish descent. Their married life extended over thirty-one years. Two years after the death of Mrs. Blaine in 1795, he married a second wife, a widow, Mrs. Duncan, who lived until 1850. Colonel Blaine himself died in 1804.

The eldest child of Colonel Ephraim and Rebecca was named James after his grandfather. He was born in 1766. His first wife, Jane Hoge, died in childbirth in 1793. In 1795 he married Margaret Lyon, — again a daughter of the north of Ireland. Like his father he engaged largely in mercantile pursuits, and had an especial fondness for trading in land. He had the advantage in his youth of a somewhat prolonged residence in France, and, later, of a tour in Europe. He gained a wide knowledge of his own country by several trading trips to New Orleans, a long and tedious journey down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, when as yet the steamboat had not been invented. It is a singular fact that from the first James Blaine who emigrated from Ireland to the latest, the son of the subject of this biography, every member in this line has changed his permanent residence. James, the son of Ephraim, removed from Carlisle, first to Brownsville, and then to Sewickley, in Allegheny County, on the Ohio River, about ten miles below Pittsburg.

Ephraim Lyon, son of James Blaine, and father of James Gillespie Blaine, was educated at Washington College. That the foregoing phrase means much less than it signifies when written of a young man of the present generation is evident from the fact that the first term-bill of

Ephraim Blaine was rendered at a time when he was but eleven years old. Nevertheless he was well educated, for that time, as is shown by his ability years afterward to direct his son's studies in preparation for college, and to help him in languages and mathematics. After leaving college he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He seems never to have engaged actively in the practice of his profession, partly perhaps, in the earlier years, because of the absence of necessity so to do. He did, however, hold a commission as justice of the peace. His expensive tastes, large hospitality, lack of economy, and the demands of a growing family, encroached greatly upon the family fortune. He had an inherited inclination to business operations in land, which he transmitted to his eminent son. His own transactions were the reverse of fortunate. In his son the trait, although subordinate to other things, was combined with much business sagacity, and to it he owed not only the foundation, but much of the superstructure of his fortune.

In 1820 Ephraim Lyon Blaine married Maria Louise Gillespie. Once more the family alliance was with a descendant of an Irish immigrant. But in this case, although the Gillespies also were Scotch-Irish, they were Roman Catholics. The marriage ceremony was performed by a priest of that church at the Gillespie homestead, "Indian-

hill," in Brownsville, and the young couple took up their residence at Sewickley. Mrs. Blaine lived until her distinguished son had completed his first term as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Between the two there always subsisted the tenderest relations of mutual love and respect. The mother was a devout Catholic, but her character was devoid of religious intolerance. Although according to the usual practice in the case of the marriage of a Catholic and a Protestant her other children were baptized as Catholics, James was brought up as a Presbyterian. She recommended her own religion by her large-hearted charitableness and kindness. Long after her death Mr. Blaine wrote of her to a friend: "It seems to me here and now that I would give worlds could I have had a single parting word. The last message my mother left in her conscious moments was to me. The last word she ever uttered audibly was my name, after her intellect was clouded with the shadow of the dark valley. She was the most loving, devoted, and affectionate of mothers, and my love for her was very great." [1]

Ephraim Blaine removed from Sewickley to Brownsville not long before the birth of his son James, and there the boyhood of the future statesman was passed. Brownsville was situated

[1] *Biography of James G. Blaine*, by Gail Hamilton, p. 235.

on both banks of the Monongahela River. At that time Washington County, already reduced from its original proportions,[1] was still much larger than it is now. The home of the Blaines was in West Brownsville, which is still in Washington County, whereas Brownsville proper is in Fayette County. Brownsville, at the crossing of the Monongahela, was an important station on the Cumberland road, the national turnpike between the Potomac and the Ohio rivers, the subject of many a Congressional debate on the constitutionality of internal improvements, and the cause of the most voluminous veto message ever written by a president of the United States. In the years between 1830 and 1840, when the western country was filling up rapidly, and when as yet the railway did not penetrate that region, the national road was the busiest of thoroughfares. Tradition tells of twenty-five loaded coaches starting at the same time from each end of the road, Cumberland on the east and Wheeling on the west. It was virtually the only line of communication from the seaboard to the Ohio River, upon which passengers and freight were transported to southern Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and all the middle west. Thus, although

[1] "The county of Washington, as it anciently was, taking in all the state south and west of the Monongahela." — Letter from Mr. Blaine to John D. McKennan, Sept. 5, 1881.

Brownsville was a country town, its young inhabitants had frequent opportunities to see the great men of the land as the coaches conveying them to and from the capital stopped for change of horses and for meals. Jackson, Clay, and Polk were among those who made use of the national road for this journey. It is not only possible but probable that youthful glimpses of these and other great men may have turned the thoughts of the boy Blaine toward a political career.

When James was about ten years old he made a long visit to his cousins in Lancaster, Ohio. The wife of Thomas Ewing was a cousin of his mother, and during nearly a year, in 1839 and 1840, he lived in the Ewing home, and, with two of his cousins, was under the instruction, in preparation for college, of a Mr. Lyons, an uncle of Lord Lyons, afterward English minister at Washington. When Mr. Ewing, in 1841, journeyed from Lancaster to Washington to take the Treasury portfolio, in the cabinet of General Harrison, he took his son Thomas with him, and as they passed through Brownsville over the Cumberland road, left him there to continue his preparatory studies for college with young Blaine.

In 1842 Ephraim Blaine was elected prothonotary of Washington County, then an office of

not a little importance. He was an earnest Whig and a strong partisan of Henry Clay. The canvass that year was exceedingly warm. General Harrison was dead, and the Whigs in Congress were engaged in their struggle with Tyler. Neither party neglected, in the local elections, any weapon that gave promise of helping them to victory. The Democrats bethought themselves of Mr. Blaine's Roman Catholic wife, and they brought against him, as political enemies afterward brought against his son, the accusation that he himself was a Catholic. Neither father nor son ever repudiated the charge in such a way as to imply that he regarded it as injurious.[1] Ephraim Blaine's method was characteristic. He called upon his friend, Father Murphy, the priest in

[1] In a private letter, dated in 1876, James G. Blaine wrote: "My ancestors on my father's side were, as you know, always identified with the Presbyterian Church, and they were prominent and honored in the old colony of Pennsylvania. But I will never consent to make any public declaration on the subject, and for two reasons: First, because I abhor the introduction of anything that looks like a religious test or qualification for office in a republic where perfect freedom of conscience is the birthright of every citizen; and, second, because my mother was a devoted Catholic. I would not for a thousand presidencies speak a disrespectful word of my mother's religion, and no pressure will draw me into any avowal of hostility or unfriendliness to Catholics, though I have never received, and do not expect, any political support from them." — Quoted in *James G. Blaine*, by Charles Wolcott Balestier, p. 6.

charge of the church which his wife attended, and obtained from him this novel certificate, which settled the question, and contributed a touch of humor to the canvass, whether or not it helped Mr. Blaine at the polls: —

"This is to certify that Ephraim L. Blaine is not now and never was a member of the Catholic church; and furthermore, in my opinion he is not fit to be a member of any church."

Upon being elected prothonotary Ephraim Blaine removed once more to Washington, the county seat, also a station on the Cumberland road. Both the county and the town were the first to bear the name of the Father of his Country, — with good reason, too, for Washington had been the owner of a large tract of land in this region, granted to him for his public services, and had given to Washington College, named in his honor, a part of the land on which the college buildings stand.

Young Blaine was a bright and precocious scholar. He entered Washington College at the age of thirteen, the youngest member of a class that numbered thirty-three, and was graduated in due course four years later, in 1847. The first honors of the class were divided among three members, of whom Blaine was one. When he was teaching in Kentucky the next year he sent a catalogue of the institution to one of his class-

mates, and in a long letter to him explained how it came about that in the list of teachers he was credited with having been at the head of his college class. It was inserted, he said, without his knowledge, and if he had been aware that it was to be placed there he "would have objected to it, for in fact it is not strictly true. I no more graduated No. 1 than did Tom Porter or John Hervey, nor did they any more than I, so that in that sense I might be said to have graduated No. 1, for nobody was above me." Having explained how it happened, he concluded with the following sentences, in which is introduced a pretty piece of slang: "I have been thus tedious in my explanation of this matter, because I did not wish you to think that I was fool enough to have such a thing printed concerning myself. My classmates who may happen to see it will think that I am taking a great stiff out here in Kentucky, just because I happened to get a share of the first honor."

The requirements of admission to college at the present day are so much more severe than they were sixty years ago, that the average age of those who now enter such institutions is greater than that at which Mr. Blaine ended his course. It might be thought to be a necessary consequence of this fact that his classical training did not much exceed that which is now given in the pre-

paratory schools. But those who knew him in after life are aware how false a conclusion this would be. His mind had received the discipline which is characteristic of those who have had the benefit of the old-fashioned classical curriculum, and who have profited by their opportunities. His spoken and written language, in his early manhood, even in his familiar conversation and in unstudied correspondence, was that of a scholar, — not merely correct and devoid of the *gaucherie* of the half taught, but elegant and precise, clear and terse. His familiarity with the works of the ancient classical writers seems to have had an important influence upon his own literary style, which was not an imitation of that of any other, but is suggestive of having been formed on the best models. His acquaintance with those works enabled him on occasion to enrich his own thoughts and words with apposite references to them, and with apt quotations. He had, too, acquired a taste for the best literature of all times, which he never ceased to gratify by reading omnivorously, avoiding only that which was trashy and sensational. Above all the college had imparted to him that thirst for knowledge, embracing all branches, all principles, all details, which is the trait of the true scholar.

Yet as a college student Blaine did not leave upon his classmates the impression that he was

destined for a great career. He was to them simply a bright scholar, — one of three at the head of the class, as we have seen, a youth full of fun and ready to join in the harmless pranks of college life, yet, as the professor of languages wrote to him at the end of his course, "one of the few who have passed through their collegiate course without a fault or a stain." There was a debating society, and Blaine was a member of it; but he never took an active part in the debates. As a public man his personal appearance and bearing were most impressive, but his college mates remembered him as a loose-jointed and awkward young fellow.

His instructors discerned more in him than was revealed to his fellow students. The family fortunes were low, and his father was unable to help him to the further education which he desired — a preparation for the bar. He was obliged to postpone the gratification of that wish and resort to teaching for a time, in order to earn his living and provide means for future study. With this in view he obtained from the faculty and from the individual members of it the recommendations which would enable him to make a start in life. They all signed a statement that "during the whole period of his connection with the college" he had been "a very punctual, orderly, diligent, and successful student," and

that if he should become an instructor in any institution, "his talents, literary acquirements, dignity, decision, and prudence will not fail to merit the confidence and approbation of those who may obtain his services." These are strong terms to be applied to a youth who had not completed his eighteenth year, but they were evidently chosen with care, and as they are closely descriptive of the man in his maturity, their truthfulness will not be suspected. Each of the professors gave young Blaine a separate recommendation. The head of the mathematics department testified to his "peculiar fondness" for mathematical studies, and the "clearness, accuracy, and precision" of his demonstrations. His "sound and thorough English education" was attested by the professor of English literature. The professor of languages, in the course of a strong and comprehensive certificate, remarked: "Your knowledge of the languages especially, being critical beyond what is often attained at college, fits you in a special manner for the office of instructor in this department."

Provided with these testimonials to his fitness he turned his face westward in search of employment as a teacher. His venture into the world seems not to have had the full approval of his father, and yet not to have encountered serious opposition. In less than two months after

graduation he was on his way over the Cumberland road, and thence down the Ohio River. What more natural than that the young admirer of Henry Clay should be attracted to Lexington, the home of the great Kentuckian? At all events, to Lexington he went, and made that place his headquarters until he found occupation as a teacher. A fortnight after his arrival he heard Clay speak in the market-place on the subject of the Mexican War. Long afterward he wrote to a friend that he stood "close up to the great commoner," with note-book and pencil in hand, and reported the speech as well as he could. In the same letter he writes that afterward he went to Louisville, Maysville, and Cincinnati, "and the morning he left the last-named place, December 4, he heard that Robert C. Winthrop was just elected speaker of the United States House of Representatives. He immediately notified his friends that he was a candidate for the succession, and in the incredibly brief space of twenty-two years he attained the place — a remarkable instance of faith, patience, and despatch harmoniously combined." [1]

While he was staying at Lexington he heard that a situation was vacant in the Western Military Institute, at Georgetown, about twelve miles from Lexington. He drove to Georgetown, offered

[1] Gail Hamilton's *Biography*, p. 85.

himself for the place, was told that he should have an answer in a day or two, and the next day received a letter accepting him. He entered upon his duties in January, 1848, and for the next two or three years taught Latin, Greek, and elementary geometry in the institute. It was a congenial occupation, if it was not that which he had — not definitely — determined should be his life-occupation. He was "Professor Blaine" from the start. His associates in teaching were interesting and agreeable men. Three of them were graduates of West Point, and one was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, the model of that at Georgetown. In spite of his youth he received deference from them, and inspired respect in the boys whom he taught.

The few glimpses we get of him at this period of his life not only suggest the future politician; they show in something like maturity the traits for which he was afterward famous. He knew every boy in school, by his name. Perhaps there was no accomplishment which more endeared him to casual acquaintances than his marvellous memory of names and faces, and his ability to recall the circumstances of the first meeting. His reputation in this respect sometimes led people to expect too much. He himself related that he was accosted at a town in Ohio, after one of his meetings in the travelling canvass of 1884, by a

man who referred to his memory for faces, and asked if Mr. Blaine remembered him. Evidently Mr. Blaine did not, but before his tongue made the confession already apparent on his face, the man said, with unconcealed disappointment, "Why, I was in the crowd at the station when you passed through here in 1876, and stood right before you." Professor Blaine was a great favorite with the four or five hundred young students in the institution, although he was an exacting teacher and a severe, if tactful, disciplinarian. In all these things he displayed in youth the traits of his mature manhood.

But in nothing else did he show forth the man he was to be so clearly as in his acquaintance with public affairs. Letters which he wrote while at Georgetown, some of which are printed in Gail Hamilton's "Biography," exhibit him with political principles already formed, and convictions already adopted, from which he never afterward departed. They reveal not merely an astonishingly thorough acquaintance with the men and the events of the previous political history of the country, but also an insight into the significance and probable consequences of current events most remarkable in one of his years. Are we reading the words of a boy under eighteen, and not those of an experienced politician?

"I am surprised to hear that Henry Clay's

speech [1] does not take in Pennsylvania; it was made just for the purpose of conciliating the furor of the North, but I am afraid it is going to play the devil in the South; it is tinctured too much with Abolitionism to go well there. Henry has made another mistake which will be apt to defeat him again. . . . This state will be very nearly balanced between him and Taylor when they hold their convention at Frankfort in February. . . . If you [he was writing to a Democrat] nominate Cass, Buchanan, Van Buren, or any of those men, I think the Whigs stand a very good chance." [2]

Again, in October, 1848, he wrote: —

"Are you not perfectly aghast at the late result? [The October elections.] Pennsylvania elect a Whig governor! The most astonishing thing I ever heard of. I do not think the most sanguine Whig ever dreamed of such a thing. It must be confessed we have not done so well in Ohio as we wish, but then you must remember that there existed a good many elements of discord among the Whigs, which can all be smoothed over before the 7th of November. Besides, Weller

[1] At Lexington, November 13, 1847.

[2] This letter, Gail Hamilton's *Biography*, p. 93, is printed without its date, but was evidently written in December, 1847. In it he remarks that he has read President Polk's message "very attentively," and considers it on the whole a "clever document."

got the Free-soil vote, which will all be cast for Van Buren, thereby securing Taylor a plurality. But to tell the truth, I am very much afraid we will lose Ohio, but then Pennsylvania will more than make up."

His forecast of the result was met exactly when the election took place, for Pennsylvania was carried and Ohio was lost by the Whigs. One is reminded, by his boyish prediction, covering defeat as well as victory, of the prescience with which in after years he used to await the returns from three or four towns, in the early evening after an election in Maine, and thereupon telegraph to the President a confident statement of the Republican majority. Rarely did the official count vary from his prediction by more than a few hundred votes.

But at Georgetown he was merely an observer of politics, not an active participant. His duties as a teacher occupied him to the exclusion of other things in which he would have taken a deeper interest. He proposed to himself to begin the study of the law at Lexington, in the summer of 1849, but apparently did not carry out the purpose.

The superintendent of the Institute was Colonel Thornton F. Johnson. Twenty miles from Georgetown, at Millersburg, was a young ladies' seminary, at the head of which was the wife of Colonel Johnson. It was quite natural

that there should be a friendly acquaintance between the teachers of the two institutions. Young Blaine visited Millersburg and met there Miss Harriet Stanwood, of Augusta, Maine, who was a teacher in the seminary, as was also her older sister Caroline. They were strongly attracted to each other from the first meeting, and after a short engagement were married, on June 30, 1850.

Harriet (Stanwood) Blaine was a descendant, in the sixth generation, from Philip Stainwood, whose name first appears on the records of Gloucester, Massachusetts, in 1652. Her ancestors without a single exception, both paternal and maternal, — Caldwells, Appletons, Dodges, Hodgkinses, Hoveys, Treadwells, Willcombs, and many others, — were resident in Essex County, Massachusetts, long before the end of the seventeenth century. There is no trace of the admixture of the blood of any immigrant more recent than the year 1675. One branch of the family removed to Ipswich, in Essex County, in 1723, and there Harriet Stanwood's father was born, in 1785. He removed to Augusta, Maine, in 1822, two years after the admission of the state to the Union. Mr. Stanwood was twice married. Of his ten children Harriet was the ninth, — the seventh by his second wife, and the fifth of six daughters.

The married life of Mr. Blaine, which was terminated by his own death, — Mrs. Blaine died in 1903, — was one of uninterrupted harmony and delight. No man ever had better reason than he to enjoy his own family, and no man was ever happier in the companionship of wife and children. Mrs. Blaine was a woman of brilliant mind and of keen wit, a fitting mate of her husband in mental quality. More than this, she was able to enter to the fullest extent into the subjects which interested him. Her literary tastes were in strict agreement with his. Together they read and enjoyed the works of the great writers of fiction, poetry and history. She not only sympathized with her husband in politics, and shared and incited his ambitions, but she brought so good a judgment to the consideration of public questions that Mr. Blaine habitually talked over political questions with her, and frequently sought her advice. All these statements are true of her from the early years of their married life. One of her Augusta cousins, who like the most of his family had been a Whig, did not pass over the easy path into the Republican party, but continued to be a "straight Whig." It was soon after the great religious "revival" of 1857 that Mrs. Blaine who, together with her husband, was a convert of that time, remarked to a friend that she was afraid that —— (naming

her errant Whig cousin) had fallen from grace. Her zeal and earnestness in all things pertaining to Mr. Blaine occasionally imparted to her utterances a pungency of phrase which — amiable fault as it was — caused some injury to her own popularity.

Seven children were the issue of this marriage. The first-born, Stanwood, died in infancy. Death did not again invade the family until 1890, when, within the space of three weeks, Walker, the oldest son, and Alice, the oldest daughter were taken away. From their earliest years Mr. Blaine was the friend and companion of his children. His inexhaustible store of information upon a thousand subjects was always at their command. He stimulated their minds by questions designed to test their knowledge, and to lead them on to inquiries which gave him the opportunity to instruct them by lessons of their own seeking. A familiar picture of him in such companionship is in the mind of one who was accustomed freely to enter the Augusta home unannounced; Mr. Blaine and Emmons stretched at full length upon the carpet in the library, above an open atlas upon which the father was pointing out on the map interesting places, and giving his young son of eight or nine years a lesson in geography, physiography, and history, all at once. It need not be said that

the children had an admiration for and a confidence in him that knew no bounds.

Mr. Blaine remained at the Georgetown Institute until the close of the school year in 1851. Then, partly perhaps in consequence of the death of his father, which took place in June, 1850, and partly by reason of the retirement of Colonel Johnson from the institution, he closed his connection with the school. There were other and weighty reasons for the change. He was already married, and felt that it was time for him to begin the study of law. He therefore went to Philadelphia and began his studies. His wife went, for the time, to her mother's home in Augusta. In the summer of 1852 he answered in person an advertisement for a teacher in the Pennsylvania Institute for the Blind, and was at once accepted in preference to a considerable number of earlier candidates. He continued to be a teacher in the school a little more than two years, from August, 1852, until November, 1854. The arrangement was an excellent one for his purposes. He had a home to which he could bring his wife and his infant son Stanwood; and his duties were sufficiently light, and his salary was large enough to enable him to continue his studies for the bar.

As in Kentucky, he won respect and esteem as a teacher in Philadelphia. He taught mathe-

matics and the higher branches to the blind pupils, and left behind him a reputation which lasted many a year as one who contributed greatly to the social as well as the intellectual life of the institution. His pupils used to tell of the spirit and appreciation with which he and Mrs. Blaine read aloud to them from the works of Dickens and from the humorous writings of the time, and of the fun which they had in the spelling-bees, especially when they tried to spell the teacher down.

III

EDITOR AND POLITICAL LEADER

Near the close of the year 1854 there was an abrupt change in the life of Mr. Blaine, and in all his plans and purposes. His career as a teacher of youth came to an end; he abandoned his intention to become a lawyer; he laid aside his cherished longing to pass his days in his native Pennsylvania. He entered a new profession in a new home, and took up an occupation which opened before him an unobstructed path to the most conspicuous and honorable place in public affairs.

Since his marriage he had made more than one visit at Augusta, Maine, the birthplace of his wife, where two of her sisters still resided in the family homestead. The sad occasion of one of these visits was the death of his firstborn, who was taken to Augusta for burial. He used to say afterward that he was attracted and charmed from the beginning by the alertness and thrift of the New England people, whom he was then meeting for the first time, and that he contrasted it not only with the indolence and improvidence which characterized Kentucky in slavery times,

but also with the lavishness that had prevailed in his own home in Pennsylvania. In Augusta he met and became acquainted with many of the leading men of the city, and made a deep impression upon them by his thorough familiarity with the public questions of the day, by the depth and sincerity of his convictions, by the brilliancy of his conversation, and by his easy and distinguished manners.

Among his new friends was Mr. John Dorr, who for ten years had been associated with the Hon. Luther Severance in the conduct of the "Kennebec Journal," a weekly Whig newspaper published at the state capital. Mr. Severance was the editor of the paper from the time of its foundation in 1825 until President Taylor, in 1850, appointed him the first Commissioner of the United States to the Hawaiian Islands. Meanwhile he had served frequently in the Maine Legislature, in both branches, and in Congress, from 1843 to 1847. He took a distinguished position in the National House of Representatives. His speech against the Tariff of 1846 was one of the keenest and most effective made by a Whig in either House. His analysis of Secretary Walker's report, on which that act was based, and his skillful use of statistics in refutation of some of its arguments, won for him a high place among his colleagues. But, after all,

it was as editor of the "Kennebec Journal" that he performed his greatest and most lasting work.

During the middle period of the last century the country newspaper exerted great power in the formation of public opinion. Yet even in the cities there was then nothing that could properly be termed a profession of journalism. Men became editors by accident, not by education and premeditation. Hezekiah Niles, Horace Greeley, James Watson Webb, James Gordon Bennett, Nathan Hale, Joseph T. Buckingham, Francis P. Blair, Thomas Ritchie, George D. Prentice, Thurlow Weed, — not one of them came to his position at the head of an influential newspaper as a result of preliminary training and apprenticeship. Many of them began life as printers "at the case," and acquired their first knowledge of public affairs, in large part, from the "copy" which they put in type, and studied while they worked. In most cases they founded each his own newspaper, and gained influence for it by the force and lucidity with which they discussed the political issues of the day. In the country the process of evolution of editors was quite similar to that in the cities. It was not unusual for lawyers who had not been too successful at the bar to become, first occasional contributors to the weekly newspaper, and afterward, as a separation of business and literary duties became neces-

sary, the regular editors of country newspapers. They did not all turn out to be good editors, nor powerful and luminous writers; but here and there, more frequently than one would have expected, a real leader of public opinion was developed. His articles upon the questions of the time would be widely copied, and his reputation would reach to the limits of his state, sometimes beyond them.

In a time when books were few, when money was scarce, when newspapers were expensive, before the present elaborate system of distributing city dailies at daybreak scores of miles from the place of publication had even a beginning, the country newspaper, the county weekly newspaper, was the great source of political and general intelligence for a large majority of the people of the land. They expected the editor to furnish them with comprehensive views of passing events in the political world, and to interpret those events for them. The editor recognized it as his duty to meet this expectation, and performed it to the best of his ability. He did not assume that his readers desired merely opinions, and that they would turn impatiently from an article which they could not read in five minutes. He knew that they would give their evenings to a careful and studious perusal of his editorial articles. Accordingly he gave them not merely the result of

his own thinking, but a statement of the mental process by which he had reached that result. The editors of that time did not attempt to "cover" all the news of the world in each issue; but the few things they did treat they explained and expounded, and set forth their political faith and the reasons for it with patient iteration.

The country newspaper thus became an oracle, and the editor was its mouthpiece and interpreter. Farmers pored over its closely printed columns. Leading articles were discussed around the stove in the country store by the neighbors who gathered there for conversation. The editor might have taken no special course of training to qualify him to be a leader of public opinion, but his duties forced him, and his opportunities invited him, to become the one man in the community who studied politics deeply. He was made a leader by the mere force of the position he occupied. What more natural than that he should be deemed the fittest person to set forth his views in spoken debate in the halls of legislation, state and national, or to carry out his principles in executive station?

Luther Severance himself was one of the best products of the system, if system it may be called. He was a graduate of the printers' case, and like many other editors of the time, frequently put his articles in type without having previously written

them. He made the "Kennebec Journal" the most influential leader of public thought in the state. His constituency was an intelligent community, ninety-seven per cent. native, and almost exclusively of New England origin. Maine usually gave a Democratic majority at national and state elections, but, largely no doubt in consequence of Mr. Severance's efforts, Kennebec County, one of the largest in the state, was consistently Whig. Augusta, as the capital, was naturally a place of much political importance. Commercially it was the head of navigation on the Kennebec River, and was the market for the country trade of a large and prosperous region.

On the appointment of Mr. Severance as Commissioner to Hawaii, he and his partner, Mr. Dorr, sold the "Journal" to William H. Simpson and William H. Wheeler, who conducted it until 1854. Mr. Wheeler meantime sold his interest in the paper to his partner, but continued to act as editor until the spring of 1854, when he retired, and Joseph Baker, a leading lawyer of Augusta, was employed as editor. It is not a matter for wonder that with an editor wholly without experience, who was moreover actively carrying on a lucrative law business, the paper sometimes suffered. It was this circumstance that led to the entrance of Mr. Blaine into the profession in which he also was without experience.

The idea was first suggested to him by Mr. Dorr, who, although no longer pecuniarily interested in the paper, was concerned as to its future. He had a pride in its past, and both personally and politically desired that it should retain its standing and influence. He saw qualities in Mr. Blaine which were most desirable in an editor, — wide information, strong convictions, and felicity of expression. The suggestion took a strong hold upon the young man. It was on a railroad train by which Mr. Blaine was returning to Philadelphia to resume his work as teacher in the Institute for the Blind, that the proposition was first made. Upon considering it with his wife after reaching Philadelphia, he determined to undertake the duty, if the necessary arrangements could be made. As he lacked the necessary capital he applied for assistance to his two brothers-in-law, Jacob and Eben C. Stanwood, both prosperous merchants in Boston, who approved the plan and furnished the means to carry it into execution. Accordingly he resigned his position and returned to Augusta ; a partnership with the editor was formed, and the issue of the "Journal" for November 16, 1854, announced that the paper would in future be conducted by Messrs. Baker and Blaine. It may be said here that Mr. Baker's business as a lawyer soon compelled him to retire. Only two months after the change just noted he

sold his half interest to John L. Stevens, and during the whole of the remaining time of Mr. Blaine's active connection with the paper it was conducted by Messrs. Stevens and Blaine. Between these men there was a lifelong personal and political friendship. Mr. Stevens, after his retirement from the editorship, was United States minister to three countries, — to Paraguay, to Sweden and Norway, and to Hawaii. It was he who at Honolulu, at the time of the revolution in 1893, took the measures that were afterward so severely criticised by his political opponents.

The position which Mr. Blaine now undertook to fill was exactly suited to his tastes and talents. From boyhood he had shown a leaning toward political discussion, and whether or not we suppose him to have been already stirred with ambition to enter public life, he had certainly stored his mind with such information regarding men and events, issues and policies, as was likely to be most useful in conducting a party paper. He had the ardent nature which develops a strong party man, and had already formed convictions and contracted associations to which a young man adheres more tenaciously than does one who, in mature age, has acquired the mental poise that enables him to revise his own opinions. He was able to adapt himself easily to the modes of life and of thought of the new community into

which he was entering, but, young as he was, he opened before that community a wider horizon, and gave it a more extended vision than it had before. A facile pen, a wonderful memory, a tendency to intellectual combativeness, and a social disposition so fascinating that it made his political antagonists his personal friends, — all combined to make him an ideal editor, for the time and the place. He plunged into work at once. Broad national questions were absorbing public attention. To these he addressed himself; but he devoted his spare time to a careful study of the political history of Maine, in order to fit himself for all the duties of his position.

Mr. Blaine occupied himself at one time by marking carefully, in the office file of the first volume or two of the "Kennebec Journal" under his own editorship, his own contributions. It is an amusing incident that the first issue contains a review from his pen of a work on the Epistle to the Romans, by Abiel A. Livermore. Mr. Blaine was not then what was known as a "professing Christian," but he was a convinced believer in the Presbyterian creed, and a stout defender of it. Mr. Livermore's doubts and criticisms seemed to the young reviewer weak and illogical. Two passages, somewhat similar to each other, show his method of dealing with the semi-heretic. "The election of some to eternal salvation is here

[in the Epistle to the Romans] taught, or it is not. If it is, admit it honestly. If it is not, deny it boldly. . . . Is the Bible the Word of God, or not? If it is, say so; if it is not, say so like a man, and take the responsibility." Mr. Blaine was all his life inclined to theological speculation, and often held long and earnest discussions on the points of creeds, not only with his own ministers, but with visitors at his home, and with members of his family.

Never in the history of the country was there a more favorable time for a young editor to push his way to the front. Old political associations were dissolving, new associations were forming. The authority of party "war-horses" could not prevail to hold men to their allegiance. Henry Clay was dead, and the issues with which he had been most prominently connected, except those arising out of the institution of slavery, were laid aside and forgotten. A variety of circumstances, chiefly the lavish supply of gold from California, made the low Tariff of 1846 so successful that it was impossible to carry on an effective protectionist propaganda. No one regarded internal improvements, or French spoliation claims, or the land question, or the Bank, — questions that had disturbed politicians during the preceding twenty years, — as being still living issues. Slavery, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, Kansas

and Nebraska, "squatter sovereignty," — these were the subjects that engrossed attention. The Whig party had gone to pieces after the crushing reverse of 1852. Both at the North and at the South a large fraction of that party had been carried as by a whirlwind into the "American," more popularly known as the "Know-Nothing," movement. Although it did not so appear at the time, the disruption of the Whig organization and the springing-up of a passionate opposition to members of one religious faith, — as un-American as it was certain to be transitory, — was a potent agency in unifying sectional feeling on both sides of Mason and Dixon's line. Hostility to Roman Catholics was too slender a basis for a national party, particularly when it was necessary for that party, in order to remain whole, to refrain from expressing any opinion on the subject which all men, the members of that party included, were discussing hotly, on every street corner. So it came about that in the South all the old Whigs except a few "Union-savers" drifted into the Democratic party. At the North old animosities between Whigs and Democrats were forgotten, if they agreed in thinking the Kansas-Nebraska Act an infamous surrender to the slave-holding South. But all the Whigs did not allow themselves to be swept unresistingly into what they regarded as an abolitionist move-

ment. Conservatively they allied themselves with the Democrats, mostly led by the official class, who either did not credit the Southern politicians with a determination to make slavery dominant, or who were willing, for party purposes, that the South should rule the country.

In New England, in Maine especially, another issue, also a moral issue, helped in breaking down old party lines, so that men could pass easily from either side to the other, — the question of "temperance," and the "Maine law." Two or three years before the Republican party was formed, and took its name, the advocates of prohibition in Maine had become accustomed to act together in local contests, and even in state elections. The "temperance men" were almost to a man Republicans when the new party came into existence.

Just before Mr. Blaine removed to Maine, at the state election in September, 1854, Anson P. Morrill was elected governor. A "fusion" was opposed to a "coalition." The Democrats and the "Straight Whigs" had each their candidate for governor, but they combined forces in some of the counties in the support of candidates for the legislature. Mr. Morrill was the candidate of the Temperance, Know-Nothing and anti-Nebraska political elements, then just combining under the Republican name. The "Kennebec

Journal," after the election, classified as Republicans all the supporters of Mr. Morrill who had been elected to the legislature. In a long article, justifying the use of this designation, then a novelty, it said:

"We did not certainly know the exact political stripe of many of them, whether they were Exclusive Whigs, National Whigs, Reed Whigs, Morrill Whigs, Morrill Democrats, Free Soil Whigs, or Free Soil Democrats, Coalition Whigs, or Coalition Democrats, or Know-Nothings, and it would have been folly in the state of information which we then had to divide them off into stripes. But the term Republican has come to have a well-defined meaning, and informs every one that the person thus designated sympathizes with and belongs to the new fusion movement, or People's party that is springing up throughout the free states to resist the encroachments of slavery and maintain the rights of the North."

Mr. Blaine's readers, then, were men who had divested themselves of their old party prejudices, who were not merely willing, but eager to have their conduct in breaking away from their former political associations justified by any one who could set forth the history of past encroachments of slavery, and characterize fitly the misdeeds of the administration of Franklin Pierce. He was at his best in writing of that sort. One finds in his

political articles little that suggests a constructive statesman in embryo. His strong point as an editor was the attack. As a leader in opposition, as the spokesman of a party without a history, there was nothing for him to defend. His eye was always seeking the joints in the enemy's harness, into which to thrust his sharp-pointed sword. There was a Democratic weekly newspaper in Augusta, the "Age," which, soon after Mr. Blaine's removal to Maine, came under the editorship of Messrs. Fuller and Fuller, uncle and nephew. The junior editor is now the Chief Justice of the United States. The two rival newspapers were naturally at perpetual war. Neither of them was polite or respectful to the other. The interchange of vituperative epithets by the editors of the New York newspapers set a fashion which was almost universally followed wherever the conductor of a political journal found one of the opposite faith who would bandy words with him. In their attacks upon public men the writers of that time did not greatly surpass those of to-day in coarseness and brutality.

In January, 1855, the Republican legislature designated the "Journal" as the "State paper" in which all official advertisements were to be inserted, instead of the "Age," which had enjoyed the state patronage for thirteen years. It also made a contract with the proprietors of the

"Journal" to do the state printing. The "Journal" was a paying property by itself; the two favors by the legislature made it highly profitable. Years afterward Mr. Blaine wrote: "Was I not then State printer, making $4000 a year and spending $600, a ratio between outlay and income which I have never since been able to establish and maintain?" Besides being frugal in expenditure, he was wise in investment, for he devoted his savings to the purchase of coal lands in Pennsylvania, which yielded him a handsome return, and which increased greatly in value as the region was developed.

Politics did not occupy the young editor's attention to the exclusion of other important matters. He discussed the Crimean War, sometimes at great length, and examined other foreign topics. At the beginning of 1855, he prepared a long historical sketch of the important world events of each year of the Christian era ending with the figures 55. He wrote an extended memoir of Mr. Severance, which filled fourteen of the long columns of the "Journal." During each winter there was a course of lectures before the Augusta Lyceum. Mr. Blaine wrote each week a summary of the lecturer's views upon the subject discussed, and expressed his own opinion. These are examples of his work that show his many-sidedness.

From the editorial chair Mr. Blaine moved easily into public life. His first step in that direction was taken when he was chosen one of the three district delegates to the Republican National Convention of 1856, which nominated John C. Frémont as a candidate for president. He was one of the secretaries of that convention. His own preference in the matter of candidates was Judge McLean of the Supreme Court, who was "mentioned" for the presidency at almost every election from 1832 until 1860, and who seemed a somewhat formidable contestant for the nomination in four or five Whig and Republican conventions. Mr. Blaine had no difficulty in accepting the choice of Frémont as a wise one, and worked heartily and hopefully for his election. In the canvass in Maine, in 1856, he made his first appearance on the stump. He distrusted his own power as a public speaker, until he found, after several meetings, that his audience was attentive and interested, and that he could think clearly and express himself easily, while on his feet. He introduced one of his early speeches with a story. Gail Hamilton narrates that he went to Farmington to hear Senator William Pitt Fessenden speak, and with no intention to speak himself. But Mr. Fessenden did not arrive in time, and some of his Augusta friends put him forward to take the platform.

He likened his situation to that of a farmer who had a horse for which he asked five hundred dollars. A horse trader offered him seventy-five dollars for the animal. "It's a devil of a drop," said the farmer, "but I'll take it." The story and the speech that followed greatly pleased his hearers. Nevertheless, at that time Mr. Blaine was not a good story-teller. The art of employing humor as an aid to oratory was so necessary that he practised it diligently, and ultimately made it one of the chief features of his conversation and public discussion.

In the autumn of 1857 Mr. Blaine was persuaded by an offer of the then munificent salary of two thousand dollars a year to become the editor of the "Portland Advertiser," the leading daily Republican newspaper of the state. He continued to reside in Augusta but, by the terms of his contract with the publisher, was in Portland five days in the week. This arrangement continued for something less than three years. It was terminated in 1860, when the new publishers of the "Advertiser" decided that they must have an editor who would reside in Portland and identify himself with the interests of the city as well as with those of the paper. Mr. Blaine was not willing to leave Augusta. He had already, as a member of the legislature, opposed one of the dearest wishes of the Portland

people, that the state capital be removed to that city. Accordingly he resigned his position, and, save that he edited the "Kennebec Journal" for a short time in 1860, his career as an editor came to an end.

Mr. Blaine's first official service was rendered in a matter which gave him an opportunity to display some of his most characteristic qualities as a public man. The state prison was a burden on the treasury of Maine. There was as yet no objection to the competition of prison labor with free labor. The convicts were set to work at gainful occupations, and in spite of the fact that the prison was badly located, far from a railroad and even at some distance from a good harbor, there seemed to be no good reason why it should not be self-supporting. The legislature passed a resolve in 1858, directing the appointment of a commissioner to investigate the prison, to ascertain why it was a losing enterprise, and to propose remedies. Governor Anson P. Morrill appointed Mr. Blaine as the commissioner. His report made a most interesting exposure of bad management, wastefulness, and "cooked" accounts. He showed that, when the annual inventory of stock and materials was made in the spring, one set of values was entered, but quite another when the annual balance sheet was made up for the report to the legislature. A horse at

one time was appraised at two hundred dollars, a few months later at seventy-five dollars, and when the whole year had elapsed he would have recovered the lost value. Mr. Blaine showed that this practice had been going on for years, and that the system of diverse appraisement extended to everything, — farm tools, flour, material for manufacture, and manufactured goods. He also took the bill of fare of the prisoners and humorously calculated the enormous amount of flour, beans, meat, and other things which the cost of feeding them would procure for each prisoner. The report was accompanied by a large amount of information regarding the management and the cost of other prisons. It made a sensation in the state, and led to a change of wardens and a reform in the management of the prison.

In 1858, less than four years after his removal to Maine, Mr. Blaine was chosen one of the two members of the legislature from Augusta. He took no very active part in the proceedings during the first year; but in his second term, in the legislature of 1860, he was one of the most prominent members. The state treasurer was a defaulter. He was a former minister of the gospel who, having been extremely active in the prohibition movement, was elected to the office of treasurer as a reward of his political services. He became entangled in land and lumber specula-

tions, and was an easy tool of men much worse than himself. Mr. Blaine was the chairman on the part of the House of Representatives of the joint committee which investigated the case. The downfall of the treasurer was deplorable; but the inquiry into the origin and history of the embezzlement, and into the connection therewith of his associates in the speculation, was work in which Mr. Blaine revelled. He was too young and too strongly gifted with a sense of humor not to be amused, as well as amazed, at the audacity with which the treasurer's partners avowed acts which made them morally participants in the embezzlement, yet not punishable.

It was Mr. Blaine's singular good fortune, during his whole public life up to the time when he was a candidate before a national convention, never to have had a contest for a nomination, and never to have been in serious danger of defeat at the polls. He was elected four times to the legislature of Maine, and on each occasion was nominated by acclamation and elected by a large majority. In 1861, beginning his third term, he was chosen Speaker, and had no competitor for the nomination either then or in the following year. In the chair he showed the quick grasp of public measures, the familiarity with parliamentary law, and the ability to despatch business rapidly, which he afterwards displayed so con-

spicuously in the office of Speaker at Washington. Even in a legislature consisting largely of farmers, parliamentary tangles will occur. Mr. Blaine was particularly happy in explaining the situation so clearly that no one could make the excuse that he had voted under a misapprehension as to the effect of his vote.

From almost the earliest days of the Republican party Mr. John L. Stevens, Mr. Blaine's partner in the "Kennebec Journal," was chairman of the Republican State Committee of Maine. In 1859 he retired from that position, and Mr. Blaine succeeded him, both as representative of Kennebec County on the committee and as chairman. From that time until he was appointed Secretary of State, in 1881, he continued to be chairman, and was at the head of affairs for his party as no other man in Maine ever was. During more than twenty years he was usually the prevailing force in the Republican state conventions. He dictated platforms; the candidates were, with some exceptions, those whom he favored. He conducted the annual canvass almost autocratically. To him were left, almost without the advice and consent of the rest of the committee, the collection of campaign funds, the character of the canvass, the selection of speakers, the times and places of rallies; and his plans were rarely or never modified or criti-

cised. All reports were made to him, and he issued the orders, which his local lieutenants obeyed, promptly and unquestioningly. During the greater part of the same period it fell to him to designate many of the federal office-holders in Maine, and to find places in the departments at Washington and at foreign posts for many hundreds of his constituents.

The reader of the foregoing sentences may be pardoned if he exclaims that they describe the functions and the methods of the political "boss." There is, nevertheless, a radical difference between a true political leader and a boss. The essential characteristic of the boss is self-seeking. He may desire to use his political power to enrich himself; or he may appropriate to himself the best offices in the gift of his party; or he may exercise the influence he has obtained simply for the pleasure of exercising it, defend it by striking down all who dispute his supremacy, and let the party go to defeat whenever for the moment he loses control. No one ever suspected or intimated that Mr. Blaine used his ascendancy in the Republican party of Maine for purposes of pecuniary profit. He sought no office which that party could give him, save his seat in Congress, and for that he was indebted to the people of his district only. Moreover, he never had a competitor for it. Undeniably he enjoyed leader-

ship, as every true leader does. But he neither attained his position nor kept it by the use of terror and threats, the chief weapons in the armory of the boss. Mr Blaine was too wise a politician not to see that such a policy results inevitably in faction. He was too earnest a party man to desire anything less than a perfectly harmonious party, united in victory, united in defeat, harboring no jealousies, reserving no punishments for mutineers. He was large-minded enough to have sympathy for, as well as to understand, the momentary hostility toward himself of some politician whose ambition he had not been able to promote. But he was the last man to cherish animosities or to take vengeance upon an enemy. His method was to mollify the malcontents, to draw back into cordial relations those who were temporarily alienated from him. Not all of them were amenable to this policy, and the number of discontented increased as time went on. Moreover, there are always those who go into opposition for no better reason than that they grow tired of hearing Aristides called "the Just." Men of that stamp grew tired of the consummate political generalship of Mr. Blaine, which gathered around his standard most of those who did not hold themselves apart on account of envy or disappointment. But all those who chafed under his supremacy never consti-

tuted more than a pitiful minority of the Republicans of Maine.

In another most important particular he differed widely from the typical political boss. Sometimes he did not carry his plans, but defeat or success made no difference in the energy which he put into the ensuing campaign. Nor was it, as in the case of some leaders, a mere pretence of energy, for he won for candidates whom he had not selected victories as notable as for those who were his original choice. Neither as a political chieftain in Maine nor in a national canvass was he ever known to sulk in his tent, however greatly his plans might have been disarranged, no matter how grievous his personal disappointment might have been. It is easy to ascribe his conduct in this respect to policy, but does it not mark the essential difference between a party leader and a leader who has degenerated into a boss? In the one case and not in the other, success of the party, and an opportunity to carry into effect the principles of the party, are the chief, the only controlling motives, and personal triumph is secondary. How few politicians there are who can feign a deep interest in the fortunes of a candidate to whom they have been warmly opposed, or who can refrain from exultation if rejection of their plans has been followed by party defeat! After all it is not the acts of a leader,

so much as his motives and purposes, so much as his inaction after being thwarted, that distinguish one who is a boss from one who is not.

Mr. Blaine was not a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1860. Mr. Stevens, his former partner, who was a delegate, was an earnest partisan of Mr. Seward. Mr. Blaine went to Chicago as an interested spectator of the proceedings. He also was an admirer of Seward, but he not only favored the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, but exerted himself zealously to bring it about. In one of his letters he tells of his constant effort during the journey to Chicago to persuade Governor Lot M. Morrill, one of the Maine delegates, that Lincoln was the man for the time. Mr. Morrill was not convinced until he reached the convention city. After the nomination had been made, Mr. Blaine accompanied to Springfield the committee appointed to give to Mr. Lincoln formal notice of the action of the convention. On his return to Augusta he found Mr. Stevens in a state of great disappointment over the defeat of Seward, and at his request resumed for a few weeks his old position as editor of the "Kennebec Journal." The summer and autumn months of 1860 were a season of great activity and hard work. Mr. Blaine managed the Republican canvass, and was himself constantly on the stump. The Democratic candidate for governor

that year was the Hon. Ephraim K. Smart, a politician with whom Mr. Blaine had had many a passage at arms in the legislature, and one whose record as a former member of Congress and as a political editor was not marked by absolute consistency. Mr. Blaine discussed Mr. Smart in none too polite terms. He usually began his remarks by taking the text from the Prophet Hosea, "Ephraim is a cake not turned," to which he added, "I propose to turn him."

The election of Mr. Lincoln and the outbreak of the Civil War threw upon men in the position of Mr. Blaine new and onerous duties. It was necessary, for the time, to forget politics and to devote energy to the work of recruiting and organizing military forces. Mr. Blaine became the constant unofficial adviser of Governor Israel Washburn, Jr. He gave his help to the cause in every possible way except that of actual military service.[1] By voice and pen he urged enlistments;

[1] He was drafted as one of the quota of Augusta, and paid for a substitute. He was obliged to listen to many a jeer afterward for having, as was alleged, evaded the duty to which he urged others. But no one can doubt that he was much more useful in the actual field of his endeavor than he would have been with a musket on his shoulder. He always took the sneers of Democrats in good part, and was accustomed to say with a laugh that his only mistake was in taking a substitute bearing the surname —— [a well known Democratic name] for the fellow deserted at the first opportunity.

his advice was sought and followed in the selection of the officers of Maine regiments; frequent visits to Washington and personal applications to the Secretary of War facilitated the mustering, arming, clothing, and movement of the troops of the state. Later on he was accustomed to visit hospitals, ascertain what was needed to ameliorate the condition of the sick and wounded, and take steps for their relief.

His whole soul was enlisted in the effort to "put down the rebellion." At an extra session of the legislature in 1861, and still more at the regular session in 1862, he used all the power he could exert as Speaker of the House to secure the adoption of measures to strengthen the hands of the national administration. At this period he was in favor of the most radical policy. He urged emancipation, confiscation, and the employment of negroes as soldiers for the Union army, in order as quickly as possible to destroy the power of the Confederates. During the session of 1862, he left the chair to make an elaborate defence of a series of resolutions in favor of these measures, and to reply to the leader of the Democrats on the floor. His speech on this occasion is printed in his volume of "Political Discussions," [1] and is a fine example of the best political reasoning of

[1] Norwich, Conn.: The Henry Bill Publishing Company. 1887.

that time, fortified by abundant citations of authorities, and expressed with felicity and lucidity. He read his own views into the President's message sent to Congress three months before, and he foretold with characteristic prescience the adoption of the measures advocated in the resolutions.

"I read, sir, in that message, something more than a great proposition for compensated emancipation. I read in it a declaration as plain as language can make, that whatever measures may be deemed necessary to crush out this rebellion speedily and effectually will be unhesitatingly adopted. What else does the President mean when he says that '*all* indispensable means must be employed for the preservation of the Union,' that 'the war must continue' as long as resistance continues, without regard to the ruin which must attend it? What does the President mean by this language? Still more, what does he mean when he declares that 'such measures as may obviously promise great efficiency towards ending the struggle must and will come?' I ask the gentleman what the President means by that, and he refuses to answer me. It means the adoption of precisely such measures as we are discussing here to-day, and these resolutions are but sustaining the already foreshadowed policy of the President, whenever the necessity for their en-

forcement arises, or whenever they may, in his own language, 'promise great efficiency towards ending the struggle.'"

The canvass of 1862 was one of great importance. The disasters to the Union cause and the unusual and arbitrary acts of the Executive, necessary as they may have been in the circumstances, gave a fresh opportunity to those who, from any cause, were opposed to the administration of Mr. Lincoln. The Democratic conventions in most of the leading states of the Union made much of the steps that had already been taken in the direction of rendering the institution of slavery useless as a support of the cause of the South. They condemned such action as unconstitutional, predicted that the consequence would be to fill the Northern states with a degraded population, and did all that was possible to arouse race prejudice.

Mr. Blaine foresaw, early in the season, that there was to be a fierce political contest. Weeks before the meeting of the Democratic convention in New York he predicted the nomination of Horatio Seymour for governor, and expressed his fear that the Republicans would be defeated. He was to bear a double burden that year, for not only was the conduct of the state canvass intrusted to him, as usual, but it was fully understood that he was to be the Republican candidate

for Congress from the third district, and he would be obliged to look especially after his own political fortunes. At the district convention held at Waterville on July 8, 1862, he received the first of seven consecutive unanimous nominations as a Representative in Congress. In his speech accepting the nomination he indicated that there was but one plank in his platform.

"I deem it my duty to say that if I am called to a seat in Congress, I shall go there with a determination to stand heartily and unreservedly by the administration of Abraham Lincoln. In the success of that administration, under the good Providence of God, rests, I solemnly believe, the fate of the American Union. If we cannot subdue the Rebellion through the agency of the administration, there is no other power given under Heaven among men to which we can appeal. Hence I repeat that I shall conceive it to be my duty, as your representative, to be the unswerving adherent of the policy and measures which the President in his wisdom may adopt. The case is one, in the present exigency, where men loyal to the Union cannot divide."

The result of the elections throughout the country came perilously near being a political disaster. In many of the states, notably in New York, Ohio, and Illinois, the Republicans were defeated. The administration majority in the

House of Representatives was reduced to about twenty. Mr. Blaine was elected ; but for the first time in ten years one of the Maine districts returned a Democrat. The Republican candidate for governor, Abner Coburn, slipped in by the abnormally small majority of four thousand. He was an excellent man, but an extremely weak candidate, and was in office but a single year.

Mr. Blaine had an opportunity, before he began his service in Congress, to render important assistance to the administration by organizing a great victory at the state election of 1863. By his advice the Republican name was dropped for a time. All who favored the preservation of the Union by the exercise of military power were invited to the annual state convention. Mr. Blaine selected as the candidate for governor Samuel Cony of Augusta, an old Democrat, but one whose loyalty was above party. He easily secured the nomination for Mr. Cony, and followed the action of the convention by organizing the most systematic and thorough canvass Maine had ever known. Political rallies were held in every town and hamlet. Speeches and other documents to be read at home were sent out in sufficient numbers to reach every voter, not once but many times. A considerable part of the funds necessary to defray the expenses of the campaign was obtained by assessment of office-holders, a

practice against which no objection was then raised in any quarter. These measures were successful in increasing by many thousand the majority for the Union candidate. Even so far back as 1840, the result of the September election in Maine was regarded as an indication of the tendency of political movements. The Harrison men sang, —

> Have you heard the news from Maine,
> How she went, how she went?
> She went,
> Hell bent,
> For Governor Kent,
> For Tippecanoe, and Tyler too.

In war times and subsequently, even to the present day, to a certain extent, the result in Maine both affords some indication of the results at the ensuing general election, and exerts some influence upon those who wish to be on the winning side; and in 1863 Governor Cony's majority was a great encouragement to Union men throughout the North.

IV

SIX YEARS IN CONGRESS

THE Thirty-eighth Congress assembled on December 7, 1863, and on that day Mr. Blaine began a service in Congress of seventeen years, four of which were in the Senate. His first committee appointments were not to prominent places, and the part which he took in the proceedings was modest, but by no means obscure. He came forward in April, 1864, with a measure for the assumption by the general government of the war debts of the loyal states, which he advocated in a carefully prepared speech. He fortified his position by a historical study of the policy of Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury under Washington. He also proposed and urged with much earnestness an amendment to the Constitution, to strike from it the prohibition of a duty on exports. The object of his proposition was temporary, — to enable Congress to impose a duty on cotton exported, but his argument was a general one. Neither he nor any one else would favor a systematic taxation of exports, but emergencies in respect of certain articles of production do arise when the power to tax exports would be

useful. It is a fact to be remembered that this is the only power inherent in sovereignty which is expressly renounced in the Constitution, and is therefore the only one which does not exist, either in the national government or in the states.

Mr. Blaine occasionally engaged in debate, properly so called, and acquitted himself with credit. When the bill organizing the National Bank system was under discussion he attacked a provision allowing the banks to charge and collect seven per cent. on their loans. He disclaimed belief in usury laws, but insisted that so long as some of the states forbade the taking of interest beyond six per cent., the national banks in those states, which would not be amenable to state laws, should not be permitted to take more than private lenders and state banks. He fought valiantly for an amendment to prevent this injustice, but was opposed by Thaddeus Stevens, who virtually controlled the House, and was unsuccessful. But subsequently he brought the measure forward again, in a slightly different form, and carried his point, on a yea and nay vote. It is perhaps significant that Mr. Stevens did not answer to his name on this amendment, although he is recorded as having voted on the roll-call immediately before, and on that immediately afterward.

At the beginning of the second session of the

first Congress of which he was a member, Mr. Blaine won a notable victory over Mr. Stevens. On the second day of the session, December 6, 1864, Stevens introduced a bill the aim of which was to force equality between the gold dollar and the paper dollar by imposing penalties of both fine and imprisonment upon persons who should in business transactions make a discrimination against the legal tender paper money. It also declared that a contract made payable in coin might be satisfied with paper money. The bill was referred to the Committee of Ways and Means. The fact of the introduction of the bill was not known in Wall Street until after the close of business; but the next morning there was a great advance in the premium on gold. Directly after the reading of the journal at the opening of the session on the 7th, Mr. Blaine rose, moved a reconsideration of the vote referring the bill to the committee, and supported the motion in a terse, compact, and lucid speech in which he pointed out the futility of all attempts to regulate the value of money by punishing those who would not give the better sort for the poorer, and dwelt upon the mischief already done by the mere introduction of Mr. Stevens's bill. The author of the measure defended it, although he admitted that some of its provisions might be found too harsh. Mr. Blaine's motion was car-

ried, by a good majority, and was followed by a motion, which also was adopted, that the bill be laid on the table, which, in the practice of the House of Representatives, is a vote finally to reject a measure. Naturally, in this attack upon the leader of the House, Mr. Blaine had the support of all the Democrats. It is an interesting fact that the minority who voted with Mr. Stevens included such prominent and authoritative names as General Robert C. Schenck, Henry Winter Davis, Rufus P. Spalding, Justin S. Morrill, Samuel Hooper, James A. Garfield, and others of high standing.

Mr. Stevens, in his reply to Mr. Blaine, employed that power of sarcasm which he was accustomed to bring into service, whether he was dealing with a political enemy or a friend. He sneered at Mr. Blaine's "intuitive way of getting at a great national question," a phrase which was strictly applicable to him, although it was used satirically. A month later, on January 5, 1865, Stevens brought the subject up again, incidentally, and in giving his own account of the affair said that "the House, partaking of the magnetic manner of my friend from Maine," had thrown out his bill. This was perhaps the first time that the word "magnetic" was used in a characterization of Mr. Blaine.

No more momentous political contest has

occurred in the history of the country than the presidential canvass of 1864. What change in the course of events would have been effected by the defeat of Lincoln and the election of McClellan is a suggestion that opens a wide field of conjecture. Yet no one at the present day will doubt that the supporters of the administration were right in their apprehension that such an event would render the restoration of the Union more difficult, perhaps impossible. The utmost efforts were put forth to make the victory overwhelming. Nowhere was the importance of the result more fully recognized than in Maine. That state led off in September with a magnificent Republican majority, and the triumph throughout the country was complete in November. The House of Representatives elected at the same time was Republican in the proportion of nearly four to one, for at the election of Speaker Mr. Colfax received 139 to 36 for James Brooks. New England sent an unbroken delegation of Republicans from each one of the six states.

Mr. Blaine was apparently not favored in committee assignments, for he was placed next to the last on the Committee on Military Affairs. But it is probable that he had an understanding with the Speaker that he would be assisted in carrying a resolution providing for the appointment of a select committee on the assumption of the war

debts of the loyal states. At all events the resolution was passed and Mr. Blaine was appointed chairman.

His membership of the Committee on Military Affairs brought about one of the most sensational and regrettable incidents of his public life. His defeat of Mr. Stevens on the gold bill, a bold and successful defiance of the leader of the House by a member in his first term, was the first in a long series of dramatic events. His encounter with Mr. Conkling was the second. The bill for the reorganization of the regular army was under consideration. Mr. Blaine was not in charge of the bill, but as a member of the military committee he was thoroughly informed as to the details of the measure, and as to the reasons for each of its provisions. The trouble between him and the New York member had been brewing nearly a fortnight before the 30th of April, 1866, when the final breach occurred. On one or two occasions Mr. Conkling had replied to Mr. Blaine, or had referred to what he had said, in a tone of assumed superiority which must have been offensive; but Mr. Blaine took no public notice of it. On the other hand he opposed strongly, and with perhaps too much heat, an amendment to the army bill, proposed by Mr. Conkling, with reference to the Veteran Reserve Corps. He declared that Mr. Conkling could not have read

the bill, since his remarks were based upon a misapprehension of what was proposed with reference to the corps.

When the section of the bill providing for the organization of the Provost Marshal General's office was reached, Mr. Conkling moved to strike it out altogether, because "it creates an unnecessary office for an undeserving public servant." He proceeded to make a violent attack upon Provost Marshal General James B. Fry, and insinuated, if he did not charge explicitly, that that officer had winked at bounty frauds and other scandalous irregularities. In support of his point that the office was unnecessary he read a letter from General Grant, who expressed the opinion that bureaus should not be multiplied, and that there was no necessity for a Provost Marshal General.

Mr. Blaine made a stout defence of General Fry as "a most efficient officer, a high-toned gentleman, whose character is without a spot or blemish." He broke the force of General Grant's letter produced by Mr. Conkling, by reading another letter from Grant in which he advised that the entire army business relating to deserters and desertion be placed in the hands of General Fry, as "the officer best fitted for that position." He thus made it to appear that General Grant opposed merely the formation of another bureau,

and that he esteemed General Fry highly and recommended that the whole duty which was, by the bill, to be laid on the Provost Marshal General, should be intrusted to him. Mr. Blaine went further, and expressly attributed the opposition of Mr. Conkling to General Fry to "the quarrels of the gentleman from New York with General Fry, in which quarrels it is generally understood the gentleman came out second best at the War Department." Mr. Conkling pronounced the last assertion to be false, and denied that he had had any quarrel with General Fry. A heated colloquy between the two members ensued. The next morning Mr. Blaine rose to a personal explanation and called the attention of the House to the fact that Mr. Conkling had so edited his own remarks on the previous day, for insertion in the "Congressional Globe," as to render meaningless a part of his, Mr. Blaine's, rejoinder. Mr. Conkling had said, "I am responsible, not only here, but elsewhere, for what I have said and what I will say of the Provost Marshal General." Mr. Blaine commented on the phrase "not only here, but elsewhere" as a duellist's expression. Mr. Conkling amended the sentence to read, "I have stated facts for which I am willing to be held responsible at all times and places." He treated the matter with lofty contempt, declared that the change made no differ-

ence, and having "thrown back" the imputation, closed his remarks thus: "and I say to him that the time will be far hence when it will become necessary for him to dispense to me any information or instruction with regard to those rules which ought to govern the conduct of gentlemen." A little later in the course of the debate he pronounced a statement of Mr. Blaine's "without any shadow of foundation in truth."

This encounter took place on the 25th of April. On the 30th Mr. Blaine caused to be read to the House a letter from General Fry in which he set forth in detail the circumstances of the several differences between Mr. Conkling and himself, fully confirming Mr. Blaine's original statement that the two men had quarrelled and that Mr. Conkling had been "worsted." It further appeared from copies of official papers accompanying General Fry's letter, that Mr. Conkling had been employed by order of Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to investigate cases of fraud in enlistments in Western New York, and that for this purpose a commission as special Judge Advocate was to be issued to him. While Mr. Conkling was explaining his relations with General Fry, a Democratic member by persistent questioning brought out the fact that Mr. Conkling received payment for his services, under Mr.

Dana's order, but he denied that he ever received a commission as judge advocate, and asserted that his compensation, which he admitted that he had received while drawing pay as a member of Congress, was merely a "counsel fee."

Mr. Blaine made what, it must be conceded, was an irritating speech, when he obtained the floor. He said that Mr. Conkling had taken thirty minutes the other day to explain that an alteration of the reporter's notes was no alteration. Now he had taken an hour to show that, although he had been at swords' points with General Fry for a year, there was no difficulty between them. He, Mr. Blaine, read from the law forbidding any person holding office under the government, the compensation of which amounted to $2250 a year, to receive compensation "for discharging the duties of any other office," and added, "he cannot deny that he discharged the duties of judge advocate under the special commission which I have read, and he was paid for the discharge of those duties."

Mr. Conkling again denied that he had received any commission, said that he acted only as counsel, and then, changing his tone as he changed the subject, turned upon Mr. Blaine thus: "Now, Mr. Speaker, one thing further: if the member from Maine had the least idea how profoundly indifferent I am to his opinion upon the subject

he has been discussing, or upon any other subject personal to me, I think he would hardly take the trouble to rise here and express his opinion;" and after a few more sentences to the same purport, he apologized for having been "drawn into explanations originally, by an interruption which I pronounced the other day ungentlemanly and impertinent, and having nothing whatever to do with the question."

It is well not to reproduce the reply of Mr. Blaine, one of the most picturesque passages of sarcasm in literature, and all the more remarkable for having been uttered on the spur of the moment. It was impossible for him to have prepared it in advance, for nothing had occurred before Mr. Conkling's final remarks were made to suggest that an occasion for it might arise. Yet the speech ought to be forgotten except as a classic in sarcasm. It has been necessary to narrate the circumstances of the encounter, inasmuch as it was followed by consequences detrimental to the fortunes of one of the two men, perhaps of both, if not by consequences important to the course of the history of the country. The quarrel was between two men whose memory their countrymen should honor. It led to the one lasting estrangement of Mr. Blaine's public life, one moreover which many a time he would have been glad to bring to an end. He often said to the

friends of Mr. Conkling that he never doubted that gentleman's probity or his sense of honor. But Mr. Conkling, whenever he was approached on the subject of a reconciliation, was implacable, and the two statesmen never again held personal relations of any sort with each other.

Although Mr. Blaine was not a member of the joint Committee on Reconstruction, he took a most conspicuous part in suggesting the form of the measures which were ultimately adopted by Congress. The fagots were already laid for a great political conflagration when the Thirty-ninth Congress met in December, 1865. The President had taken into his own hands the task of restoring the states lately in rebellion. His hostile and vengeful attitude toward them had quickly given place to one of excessive leniency. Under his policy the States would have come back into the Union with those in absolute control of their affairs who had been waging war against the Union for four years. They would have returned to that control almost without conditions, and with increased political power in Congress. For the abolition of slavery made each one of the former slaves a unit of the population to be counted in the apportionment of representatives, instead of three-fifths of a unit as under "the Constitution as it was." Indeed, President Johnson's provisional governments were quite devoid

of any element that could make a pretence of loyalty to the Union during the war, or that now made a pretence of accepting frankly the results of the war.

The indignation of the Northern people over such an unconditional surrender to those who had been compelled to surrender unconditionally on the field of battle, grew daily more intense in the months that intervened between the assassination of the President and the meeting of Congress. Hardly had the formal business of choosing a Speaker been completed, when Thaddeus Stevens applied the torch to the combustibles by introducing a resolution providing for the appointment of a joint committee to consider the relation to the Union of the states lately in rebellion, and declaring that no member from any of those states should be admitted to a seat in either House of Congress until that relation should have been determined. Then began the great debate on Reconstruction, which soon developed, in speech and Act of Congress, into the long war between the President and the party to which he owed his office; reached a dramatic climax in the very closing hour of the Thirty-ninth Congress; and was followed by the still more sensational impeachment proceedings.

Mr. Stevens's position, which he held consistently from the beginning of the political war

until the end of his life, was that the states had taken themselves out of the Union, that their citizens were alien enemies who had been conquered, and that the states themselves could regain their rights only by readmission as foreign territory. To this theory Mr. Blaine never gave his assent. He usually, but not invariably, supported by his vote the measures brought forward by the Reconstruction Committee, but his words, his propositions, and his votes tended to an amelioration of the harsh provisions favored by the radical members who controlled the action of the House. He was as strenuous as the most radical in opposition to President Johnson's policy, and in upholding the principle that the Southern states should not be permitted to fall under the domination of the men who had been in arms against, or who had been otherwise hostile to, the Union. He insisted upon effective guaranties against a repetition of their offence, and upon ample protection to the race which the fortunes of war left helpless in the South. To this extent he was a radical of the radicals. But he was strongly opposed to measures which imposed conditions on the South, and yet held out to the South no hope that, when the conditions had been met, the states would be welcomed back to their old place in the Union.

Mr. Blaine's first important intervention in

the momentous work of Reconstruction took place when the amendment to the Constitution now known as the Fourteenth was under discussion. Measures took their form slowly, by a process of selection from an abundance of suggestions. The gross injustice and inequality that would result from that provision in the unamended Constitution which would give the South increased representation in Congress as a consequence of emancipation, was universally recognized by Republicans. No one supposed that any Southern state would voluntarily confer the right of suffrage upon the negroes. Early in the Reconstruction conflict a small minority only of the Republicans would have favored forcing negro suffrage upon the South. Yet unless some change were made, the white men who, before the war, cast votes for themselves and three-fifths of the black population, would thenceforth vote for themselves and all the blacks; and one white man of the South who had borne arms against the government would be nearly equal in political power to two loyal men of the North.

All the early propositions so to amend the Constitution as to eliminate this injustice made the number of voters in each state the basis of apportionment. Mr. Blaine was the first to propose the principle that was ultimately adopted, namely,

that the basis should continue to be the gross population, which, nevertheless, should be diminished proportionately for purposes of apportionment, should the elective franchise be denied to any class of citizens. His plan was to deduct from the whole number of persons in any state "those to whom civil or political rights or privileges are denied by the Constitution or laws of such state, on account of race or color." His chief argument in support of the measure was that the basis of voting strength would introduce great inequality in the representation of the states of the North. He cited as an extreme case California and Vermont, the population of which states was nearly equal. Owing to the preponderance of men in California at that time, an apportionment based on the number of voters, which would give three members to Vermont, would allow eight members to California. Although the suggestion thus originally made by Mr. Blaine was incorporated, nearly in his own words, in the amendment of the Constitution reported by the Reconstruction Committee, it encountered many perils in its passage through the two Houses, — the history of which it is not necessary to narrate; but it was finally adopted both by Congress and by the states, and is to-day the most ineffective and the most openly violated provision in the Constitution of the United States.

One may question now, as few men questioned then, if the proposition first brought forward by General Schenck, to base representation upon the number of voters, would not have been the wiser plan, Mr. Blaine's powerful objection to the contrary notwithstanding. The Southern people and the Democratic party of the North opposed the amendment stoutly. Every one of the former Confederate states, except Tennessee, once rejected it with contempt. Yet in the presidential canvass of 1872 the Democratic party in national convention assembled registered a pledge "to oppose any reopening of the questions settled by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments of the Constitution." So late as 1880, it was the professed purpose of leading Southern statesmen to leave undisturbed the status of the negro as a citizen, as it was fixed by the constitutional amendment.

A "symposium" — a series of articles in answer to the questions whether the negro ought to be disfranchised, and whether he ought to have been enfranchised — appeared in the March number, 1880, of the "North American Review." It was opened by Mr. Blaine, whose article was commented upon by Senator L. Q. C. Lamar, General Wade Hampton, Alexander H. Stephens, Thomas A. Hendricks, Montgomery Blair, James A Garfield, and Wendell Phillips.

Mr. Blaine closed the discussion with a summing up of conclusions and a general commentary upon the opinions advanced by the other writers. In view of later events the articles merit careful reading and study by men of all parties and all parts of the country. Mr. Blair alone expressed the view that enfranchisement of the negroes was inexpedient and that the right should be withdrawn from them. Mr. Blaine points significantly to the fact that Mr. Blair was a member of Lincoln's cabinet when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. All the Democrats who participated in the discussion did, nevertheless, justify more or less explicitly the partial or total suppression of the negro vote, not as a permanent policy, but as a defensive makeshift while the negro was fitting himself for the great duties of a citizen. They agreed with Mr. Blaine, not only in holding that the constitutional guaranties were so strong that it would be impossible legally to take away the right of suffrage, but also in maintaining that it would be inexpedient so to do. They further assured the country that there was no disposition on the part of any considerable body of Southern men to attempt a reversal of the conditions imposed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Evidently there has been a great change in the temper of the Southern people. In several of the

Southern states negro suffrage has been practically abolished by constitutional amendments which make no reference to race, color, or servitude. It has been abolished permanently. Precisely the situation which it was the one purpose of the Republicans, in 1866, to avoid, now exists. The white voters alone exercise all the political power which is allotted to a population consisting of whites and blacks. If the proposition to base representation upon the number of voters had then been adopted, no doubt it would, as Mr. Blaine pointed out, have increased unduly the number of members from certain states. But those states were all in the North, and the proportionate power of the "loyal states" would have been thereby increased, as the Republicans of the time desired. In Reconstruction times the measure would have served as an incentive to the Southern states to give the franchise to the black men. In all probability it would have rendered impossible the scandal of the "carpet bag" state governments. It would certainly have left the history of our country unstained by the horrors of the Ku-Klux Klan. So far as the plan of representation on the basis of voters introduced negro suffrage, it would have acted as a deterrent to disfranchisement, since it would have operated automatically to reduce representation whenever for any reason the elective franchise might be

restricted. This is wisdom after the event. In 1866 Mr. Blaine's colleagues were no wiser than he was.

The Reconstruction act was passed at the second session of the Thirty-ninth Congress. Mr. Blaine's part in that legislation was most important, although he intervened but infrequently in the debate. Only a week after the assembling of Congress, on the 10th of December, 1866, he took occasion to make a speech upon the significance of the then recent elections. The purport of it all was that the people of the North had pronounced in favor of a requirement of negro suffrage — of manhood suffrage — in the Southern states, as a prerequisite to their readmission to representation in Congress. He held then, and he adhered to the opinion when he wrote his "Twenty Years of Congress," [1] that if the states of the South had promptly and with good grace accepted the Fourteenth Amendment, there was not in Congress a body of radicals strong enough to have excluded their senators and representatives from their seats. Tennessee accepted the amendment and was readmitted. The other states showed a disposition which intensified the radicalism of the North. In Mr. Blaine's view the requirement of negro suffrage, originally unpopular throughout the North,

[1] Begun 1882; finished 1885.

gained ground rapidly; and although when Congress met the political leaders were still opposed, he believed that the people at large were heartily in favor of it.

Events were rapidly converting the leaders to the same way of thinking. Elections in the South were all carried by the Democrats, except in the States of West Virginia and Missouri. The men elected to the legislatures were almost all former officers of the Confederate army, and attended the sessions in their old uniforms. The legislatures passed laws which, had they been enforced, would have made the freedom of the colored people worse than a mockery. One by one the states rejected the Fourteenth Amendment. In all the ten legislatures only thirty-three votes were given for ratification.[1] Considering the temper of the Northern people, and their not unnatural feeling that they, and not the Southern people, had the right to prescribe the terms of reconstruction, it is not surprising that when the offer implied by the readmission of Tennessee was rejected, the hearts of the victors were hardened.

At all events such was the result. The Reconstruction Committee first reported a bill quite

[1] "The last one of the sinful ten has at last, with contempt and scorn, flung back in our teeth the magnanimous offer of a generous nation." — Speech of James A. Garfield, Congressional Globe, 39th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 1104.

in accordance with Mr. Blaine's view as to the prevailing disposition of the Republican majority. It was discussed in set speeches by several members at the first session of the Thirty-ninth Congress, in the summer of 1866. The consideration of it was resumed at the second session after the holiday season, in 1867. Many members had counter-propositions, Mr. Stevens in particular, with a radical measure based upon his peculiar theory as to the constitutional result of the war. Against his strong opposition the bill was recommitted to the Committee on Reconstruction, which soon reported back a bill providing for the military government of the states then lately in rebellion. It declared null and void any and all legislative and judicial proceedings intended to interfere with or impede the officers placed in charge of those states. It held out no promise whatever that civil government should ever be restored, and offered no opportunity to the people of the states to take steps to organize such a government.

After the debate upon this bill had proceeded several days, Mr. Blaine took the floor, called attention to the absence of all assurance to the people of the South that they might resume their old relations to the Union on any conditions, and appealed to Mr. Stevens to permit the House to vote upon an amendment which he had prepared. The new section which he proposed vir-

tually asserted that the Fourteenth Amendment would be effectively ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the states represented in Congress. It provided that when a state had ratified the amendment, had conformed its constitution and laws thereto, had established impartial manhood suffrage, had ratified the amended state constitution by popular vote, and had obtained the approval of the constitution by Congress, it should become entitled to representation. Mr. Stevens would not consent to admit the amendment. Mr. Blaine was strongly supported in his movement by General Schenck and Judge Bingham of Ohio, and finally contrived to get a vote upon his proposition by making a motion to commit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to incorporate in it the section setting forth the conditions of reconstruction. Nearly a half of the Republicans and a third of the Democrats supported the motion, but Mr. Stevens was too strong in his leadership, and the proposition was rejected.

In the Senate the principle of the Blaine amendment was incorporated in the substitute of Senator Sherman, which was adopted by that body; and after an attempt to reconcile the differences between the two houses by a committee of conference, which was abandoned through fear of a "pocket veto" of the bill, an agreement

was patched up, and the bill went to the President just early enough to force him either to sign it or to return it to the House with his objections. The bill reached the House with the veto message on the last day of the session, and it was by a piece of parliamentary strategy conceived by Mr. Blaine that Congress was enabled to pass the bill over the veto. Before the beginning of the daily session he consulted Mr. Speaker Colfax and inquired what would be his ruling as to the effect of a motion "that the rules be suspended, so that the House shall immediately proceed to vote on the question, as required by the Constitution," whether the bill should be passed over the veto. The Speaker's answer was satisfactory, and accordingly, when Mr. Blaine made the motion, the ruling was that the motion was not debatable and that while it was pending no other motion could be interposed to prevent a decision upon it. An appeal from the Speaker's decision was supported by four members only. Every dilatory motion was thus ruled out of order, the bill was passed by the constitutional majority of two thirds, and became a law when, a few hours later, the Senate also passed it over the President's veto.

The fall of the gavel in the hand of the Speaker announcing the close of the Thirty-ninth Congress was followed, with scarcely a pause, by the sound of the same instrument in the hand of the

clerk, calling to order the members-elect of the House of Representatives in the Fortieth Congress. So profound was the distrust of the President on the part of the Republicans that they did not deem it safe to relax, save for brief intervals, the close watch of Congress upon his proceedings. Intending to make the session practically continuous from March until the usual time of meeting in December, they passed an act fixing the 4th of March as the day for the beginning of the first session of each Congress. Political excitement was hardly ever, in the history of the country, more intense than it was on the 4th of March, 1867, the fateful day of the passage of the Reconstruction Act over President Johnson's veto. The opposition had almost disappeared from both houses of Congress. Prior to the admission of senators from the reconstructed states, the "loyal" states and Tennessee were represented by forty-two Republicans, nine Democrats, and three administration Republicans; and the number of opposition senators was not increased when the South was again represented. In the House, on the election of Speaker, Mr. Colfax received more than four fifths of all the votes given. Moreover, the radical element of the Republican party was apparently in control, and, as the event proved, was actually so. Impeachment was in the air.

Mr. Blaine was not in favor of impeachment. Although he ultimately yielded his judgment, as did every other Republican in the House who opposed the step, yet his course at the time and his comments upon the matter in his "Twenty Years of Congress" show that he did so most reluctantly. Immediately after the passage of the supplementary Reconstruction Act, on the 23d of March, Mr. Blaine offered a privileged resolution providing for the adjournment of the House, with the consent of the Senate, from March 26 until November 11. The idea was that the Senate should remain in continuous session, in order to prevent the President from making wholesale removals of officers and from filling the places with persons of his own appointment. Under the Constitution neither branch of Congress can adjourn for more than three days without the consent of the other.

It was quickly seen that the decision of the question on Mr. Blaine's resolution involved a contest between the radicals and the conservatives, between the impeachers and those who were opposed to the movement. General Butler led off in opposition to the resolution, and intimated plainly his belief that the President should be impeached. Mr. Blaine replied vigorously, denied that there was any strong movement outside of Congress in favor of impeachment, and

challenged General Butler to name twenty-five of the nearly two thousand Republican papers in the country which regarded "the impeachment movement as one seriously to be undertaken on the part of Congress at this time." Thaddeus Stevens tried to break the force of Mr. Blaine's argument by intimating, on the strength of a statement which he said he had heard Mr. Blaine make, to the effect that there ought to be no impeachment which would result in making Senator Wade, of Ohio, the acting President, that Mr. Blaine would have taken a different position if Senator Fessenden, of Maine, instead of Senator Wade, had been chosen president *pro tempore* of the Senate, and thus placed next in succession to the presidency.

Mr. Blaine, supported by all the Democrats and by a considerable minority of Republicans, was successful in the preliminary votes upon his resolution; but the radicals filibustered, succeeded in postponing the final vote, and ultimately defeated the measure. Nevertheless Congress took two long recesses during the summer and autumn, and the issue of impeachment was not fairly encountered until the second session, which began in December. On the fourth day of that session the report made by Mr. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, toward the close of the first session, was taken up. Mr. Blaine did not partici-

pate in the debate, but when the vote was taken he was one of the 108 voting no. The affirmative consisted of 57 Republicans, the negative of 66 Republicans and 42 Democrats. But during the ensuing session the President affronted the Republicans deeply by his attempt to remove Secretary Stanton. The radicals took advantage of the resentment which this act occasioned, and the conservatives were swept off their feet. The House acted in hot haste, and, by a strict party vote, committed itself irrevocably to the trial of the President. No Republican and no Democrat separated himself from his party on the final issue. Moreover, the same, or nearly the same, strictness was observed in all the subsequent proceedings on the part of the House — in the choice of managers and in the adoption of the articles of impeachment. Mr. Blaine at no time during any of these proceedings spoke a word in the House on the general subject of impeachment. He voted, as did the rest, with his party. If he even then regarded the movement as a political mistake, as is more than probable, he did not deem it wise to introduce an element of discord in the party ranks, when he was powerless to persuade his fellow Republicans to retreat from the position they had taken.

But in his "Twenty Years of Congress" he has given the deliberate judgment of his later years

in a passage of characteristic terseness, force, and felicity of expression. He recapitulates the acts of a political nature which justly stirred the resentment of those who had made Johnson next in succession to the presidency, all of which tended to restore to those who had been in arms against the government, and even to increase, their political control over the states which had declared their secession from the Union; and which would have abandoned the freedmen to the operation of laws that would have made their nominal freedom a mockery. Mr. Blaine says that if the President could have been legally and constitutionally impeached for these offences he should not have been allowed to hold his office for an hour beyond the time required for a fair trial. Since this was impossible, a series of accusations was made against him in none of which was there even a hint of the real ground of hostility to him. Thus the President "was impeached for one series of misdemeanors and tried for another series." The chief accusation was a violation of the Tenure of Office Act [1] in the attempted removal of Secretary Stanton.

[1] "A statute that never ought to have been enacted, as was practically confessed by its framers when, within less than a year after the impeachment trial had closed, they modified its provisions by taking away their most offensive features." — *Twenty Years of Congress*, vol. ii. p. 378.

Mr. Blaine indicates clearly that he regards as of great force the point made by Judge Curtis, of the President's counsel, that Secretary Stanton was not protected from removal by the Tenure of Office Act. The language of that act provided that the cabinet officers should hold their offices "for and during the term of the President by whom they may have been appointed and for one month thereafter, subject to removal by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." Inasmuch as Mr. Stanton had been appointed by Mr. Lincoln during his first term, Judge Curtis held that he might, under the law, have been removed by Mr. Lincoln after the 4th of April, 1865. He was never appointed by Mr. Johnson at all. Mr. Blaine further asks, with keen analysis of the situation, if any candid man supposes that President Johnson's course with respect to the Secretary of War, if pursued by Mr. Lincoln, General Grant, or any other president in harmony with his party in Congress, "would have been followed by impeachment, or by censure, or even by dissent." Furthermore he takes pains to defend the integrity and the purity of motive of those Republican senators who separated themselves from their party associates and declared the President not guilty.

The impeachment campaign, from the original motion of Mr. Ashley, of Ohio, at the beginning

of the first session of the Fortieth Congress, to the final adjournment of the Senate sitting as a court of impeachment, extended over more than a year. As has been remarked already, Mr. Blaine's share in it was of the slightest character. But he found ample opportunity for activity in debate upon other questions. At the beginning of the Congress he was made by the Speaker a member of the Committee on Rules, of which the Speaker himself is chairman, one of the most select and important committees of the House. It was a distinct recognition of his skill as a parliamentarian. He was also placed fourth upon another important committee, Appropriations, of which Thaddeus Stevens was chairman, — a committee which at that time reported and had charge of all appropriation bills.

Soon after the first recess of Congress began, in the spring of 1867, Mr. Blaine sailed for Europe, in company with Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont, who had just completed a service of twelve years in the House, and had begun his long term of more than thirty years in the Senate. The two men were congenial, and each of them after their return testified warmly to the companionable qualities of the other. By carefully planning their itinerary they were able to see hastily much more than tourists can usually see; and the letters which they took with them and their

own standing in the public life of the country, not only secured their introduction to persons of high position in England and on the Continent, but procured them *entrée* to places not open to all. Upon their visit to the British House of Commons they were admitted to seats in the Peers' gallery. They saw both Houses of Parliament under peculiarly favorable conditions, and were highly honored when they visited the French Corps Législatif ; thus they had an admirable opportunity to study parliamentary proceedings abroad, and to compare home and foreign methods. Save for such favoring circumstances in a few of the places they visited, the European trip did not differ from that of thousands of other Americans. The tour ended about the first of September. The summer session of Congress had been held in their absence, and the Senate and House did not reassemble until November 21.

Hardly less perplexing than the problems which are classed under the general head of Reconstruction were those of Finance. From the close of the Civil War until the reëstablishment of the gold standard by the act of 1898, there was agitation, frequently renewed, for the adoption of measures supposedly in the interest of debtors, and particularly in the interest of the greatest debtor, the government of the United States. Payment of the bonds in greenbacks, an inflation

of the irredeemable paper money, and free coinage of silver, were the chief measures which were urged by public men of great prominence and which attracted a large measure of public support. President Johnson himself made the amazing suggestion [1] that in view of the large returns the bondholders had already received upon their capital, "it would seem but just and equitable that the six per cent. interest now paid by the Government should be applied to the reduction of the principal in semiannual installments, which in sixteen years and eight months would liquidate the entire national debt." Judge Kelley's proposition for the issue of interconvertible bonds, — bonds "payable" in greenbacks and greenbacks convertible into bonds, but neither bonds nor greenbacks redeemable in coin; the opposition to the resumption of specie payments; the campaign waged for the remonetization of the silver dollar; prolonged efforts to sanction the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one; and the resistance to the establishment of the gold standard, — all these were episodes in the grand struggle. In all of them except the last, in all so long as he lived, Mr. Blaine bore a conspicuous part; and in all but one of the contests in which he was engaged he stood firmly and immovably on the side of what

[1] Fourth Annual Message, December 9, 1868.

may be termed, for want of a better phrase, hard money.

In the autumn of 1867 George H. Pendleton, of Ohio, and Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts, — two men who stood in positions of large political authority in their respective parties, — startled the country by advocating a proposition, not then made for the first time, that the five-twenty bonds of the United States were legally redeemable in paper money, The suggestion was a plausible one, inasmuch as the payment of the interest upon those bonds in coin was stipulated in the act for their issue, whereas there was no mention therein of the medium in which the principal was to be paid. The fact that the subsequent act, under which the ten-forty bonds were issued, specifically provided for the payment of both principal and interest in coin, lent color to the proposition that Congress intended, by its silence on the point, to leave the question open as to the discharge of the principal of the five-twenties. These and other arguments were skillfully presented by General Butler, to the great disturbance of business and the distress of most of his party friends. Mr. Pendleton's attitude upon the question was less important than General Butler's, simply because it was assumed that the Democratic party would be unable to reach a position where it could carry its policies into execution.

To Mr. Blaine belongs the credit of having made in Congress the earliest and the most thorough answer to General Butler's thesis. At the autumn session in 1867 he took the floor, and in a masterly speech covered the whole ground of the argument in favor of an honest discharge of the obligations of the government. In a historical review of the acts providing for the creation of the funded debt during the Civil War, he showed that the proceeds of the duties on imports, for which gold only was receivable, were specifically appropriated to the payment of interest on the bonds and to the purchase or payment of the principal, through the machinery of a sinking fund; that in all the debates, in both houses of Congress, it was assumed and stated repeatedly that the principal was payable in coin; that the only reason for the omission of a clause in the bill so providing, was that it had been the uniform practice of the government from the beginning to pay in coin; that the clause in the ten-forty act was inserted because Mr. Thaddeus Stevens, who asserted when the five-twenty act was pending that the bonds to be issued were payable in gold, had changed his mind and intimated that they might be redeemed with legal tender notes; and that every Secretary of the Treasury had taken the view that gold alone was available for the payment, which view, although frequently,

plainly, and publicly expressed, had never been repudiated by Congress.

Mr. Blaine then turned to the practical side of the question. The five-twenty bonds could not be paid in greenbacks without an almost limitless issue of paper money, constantly depreciating as the amount increased. He ridiculed the idea that funds to pay the bonds could be obtained by a new issue of currency bonds. Government "would be placed in an awkward attitude when it should enter the money market to negotiate a loan the avails of which were to be devoted to breaking faith with those who already held its most sacred obligations." He urged that the true remedy for the existing financial situation was to adopt measures for a steady approach to specie payments, and for that purpose to effect an immediate and a large reduction of expenditure, by reducing the army by one half, by a corresponding curtailment of the navy, and by stopping "innumerable leaks and gaps and loose ends." With a readjusted revenue system, a considerable sum could be made available for the reduction of the debt. He pleaded for a policy devoid of "repudiation in any form, either open or covert, avowed or indirect, but with every obligation of the government fulfilled and discharged in its exact letter and in its generous spirit. . . . I am sure," he said in conclusion,

"that in the peace which our arms have conquered we shall not dishonor ourselves by withholding from any public creditor a dollar that we promised to pay him, nor seek by cunning construction and clever afterthought to evade or escape the full responsibility of our national indebtedness. It will doubtless cost us a vast sum to pay that indebtedness, but it would cost us incalculably more not to pay it."

Later in the session, on the 7th of March, 1868, Mr. Blaine delivered a second speech upon the same subject, in which he elaborated some of his earlier points, answered arguments brought forward by advocates of payment in greenbacks, and again urged the adoption of measures to make the greenbacks equal in value to gold, when the motive to pay in paper and the objection to doing so would equally disappear. These were not his only contributions during that session to the cause of honorable and sane finance, for on June 23 he made a third speech in which he examined with merciless analysis the kindred proposition to tax the bonds of the United States, showed the dishonorable character of the suggestion, and pointed out the disastrous results that would be certain to follow its adoption. He urged an adherence "to the steady, straightforward course dictated alike by good policy and good faith." From both these schemes, which

would have been ruinous to the credit of the government, the country was saved by the resolute action of the Republicans, and by the first act signed by President Grant, "to protect the credit of the United States."

As a member of the Committee on Appropriations Mr. Blaine took charge of some of the most important appropriation bills, notably those for the army and navy. He was an ardent advocate of retrenchment, as he said in a passage which has already been quoted; and in these bills he had an opportunity to defend the policy of economy against attack from two distinct quarters. The former volunteer officers of the Union army, of whom there were several in the House of Representatives, were, if not hostile, at least not over friendly to the regular army and to West Point. They were led by General Logan. The Democrats felt bound, naturally, to fulfil the function of an opposition, to oppose, and they joined with General Logan to defeat Mr. Blaine and the Committee on Appropriations. The combination was so far successful that Mr. Blaine was forced to yield to a compromise favorable to the promotion of men from the ranks, and less favorable to the graduates of the Military Academy. But the policy of economy was triumphant.

The most important public utterance of Mr. Blaine during the third and last session of the

Fortieth Congress — for during that session he rarely was heard save upon questions arising when appropriation bills which he was managing were under discussion — was a speech on national affairs, delivered on December 10, 1868, on the fourth day of the session, a month after the election of General Grant. It was a broad and comprehensive review of the consequences to be anticipated from the Republican victory. His conclusions as to some points have been so amply vindicated that readers of the speech, who did not pass through the political perils of the time, might almost reasonably regard them as commonplaces. In other respects he was altogether too optimistic. A battle had been won, and final victory was presaged; but the war was not over; as to some of the issues it is not over yet. For example: "The election of 1868 is the last in which the lately rebellious section, even if it could be wholly controlled by rebels, will have sufficient power in the electoral vote of the country to make it the object either of hope or of fear on the part of political organizations striving for the government of the nation." He could not have foreseen that only eight years thereafter, in the election of General Grant's immediate successor, the vote of the solid South was to be the object of both hope and fear; that the party to which he belonged was to be saved from defeat by an extra-

constitutional measure to which he, as a senator, would not agree; and that the united electoral vote of the South was to be, to the end of the century and beyond it, the hope and reliance of one of the great political organizations. We will not quote Mr. Blaine's exact language, for "rebel" and "loyal" and other words in use at that time have been dropped from the vocabulary of politics; but his hopeful prophecy that the ten States of the Confederacy, "viewed as one compact power," would no longer be strong enough to tempt any party to an alliance with them, has, in its essence, been conspicuously falsified.

So, too, his judgment that "it is too late to discuss negro suffrage; for having been granted it is impossible to recall it;" and his confidence that "the election of General Grant has settled the financial question." The first of these questions is still an open one. As for the other it was not settled until more than thirty years had elapsed, if it is settled now. Who can tell? But it was true, and has become increasingly evident as the years have passed, that beginning with that era there has come "a higher standard of American citizenship — with more dignity and character to the name abroad and more assured liberty and security attaching to it at home;" that our diplomacy has been "rescued from the subservient tone by which we have so

often been humiliated in our own eyes, and in the eyes of Europe." In the concluding sentence of this fine speech, fine in spite of its too confident optimism, occurs a passage which shows that he looked forward without misgiving to one class of events that were then anticipated as probabilities by no one, but that have since come to pass. "Whatever, therefore," he said, "may lie before us in the untrodden and often beclouded path of the future, — whether it be financial embarrassment, or domestic trouble of another and more serious type, or misunderstandings with foreign nations, or the extension of our flag and our sovereignty over insular or continental possessions, North or South, that fate or fortune may peacefully offer to our ambition, — let us believe with all confidence that General Grant's administration will meet every exigency with the courage, the ability, and the conscience which American nationality and Christian civilization demand." In all probability Mr. Blaine had in mind both Hawaii and Cuba when he spoke of insular possessions. But whether his intention was specific or merely general, the utterance was a remarkable one for that time. It was only a short time before the question was to be presented to the American people in a form that concerned neither the island kingdom in the Pacific, nor the Pearl of the Antilles at the mouth

of the Gulf of Mexico — when President Grant developed his Santo Domingo policy.

The Fortieth Congress was the last in which Mr. Blaine sat as a member of the majority party, on the floor. When next he was to take an active part in debate, it was to be as the bold and dashing leader of the opposition. It may be well therefore to consider briefly the quality of his service as a private member. The illustrations already given will have exhibited his political sagacity, and to a certain extent the independence of his action. Numerous examples could be given of his fairness as a political opponent. When the Democrats wished to enter upon the journal of the House their protest against the articles of the impeachment of the President, couched in excessively offensive language, Mr. Blaine alone of the Republicans voted to yield to their demand. On one occasion his tongue betrayed him into the use of the term "copperhead," then a vituperative epithet applied to Northern sympathizers with the South. When the word was objected to as unparliamentary, Mr. Blaine quickly withdrew it. The Speaker having ruled that the word was permissible, not having been applied to a member of the House, Mr. Blaine insisted on recalling it. "I did not withdraw the word as a question of order," he said. "I could have told the gentleman that he

had made no point of order. As a question of taste I confess that I have transgressed. It was in bad taste, as it always is, to use offensive political epithets in debate." He opposed the consideration of the bill making land grants to Southern railroads until the senators and representatives from those states should have taken their seats. He refused to vote to seat the Republican contestant of a seat in the House whose case rested upon the fact that the person elected had been "disloyal." He declared that he was "not going to turn around and, with this House, elect a man to represent that district. . . . If there were anything decided by the election in that district of Kentucky it is that they did not want Mr. Smith to represent them." Again, when a pending bill proposed to exclude the Southern States from the privilege of sending cadets to West Point, he opposed the measure warmly. He said that he did not believe in punishing children in the rebel states.

It is much easier to cite such examples of his fairness than it is to illustrate his readiness and resourcefulness in debate. In hundreds of cases in the course of his parliamentary life, when he was pitted against political opponents, or against his seniors in his own party, he rarely came off second best. His manner, whether in exposition of a measure which he had in charge, or in de-

fending its provisions against attack, or in answering the questions of friendly inquirers, was clear, terse, and impressive. In those times members were not required to pass a long novitiate before they were suffered to become leaders. In six years Mr. Blaine had acquired a position of prominence enjoyed by few of his fellow members, even of those much older in the service. To be sure, real leaders of men are not restricted by the rules which keep back those who come to the front by a system of regular promotion, and undoubtedly Mr. Blaine would have been a leader in any period of our political history.

V

SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker Colfax was elected Vice-President on the ticket with General Grant, in 1868. His prospective retirement from the chair of the House of Representatives gave opportunity to Mr. Blaine to aspire to a position for which both his natural faculties and his parliamentary training fitted him. He became openly a candidate for the speakership. His only rival was Mr. Henry L. Dawes, of Massachusetts, a man of very different talents and disposition, who had won a most honorable reputation during his service of twelve years in the House. Mr. Blaine, however, was much the more energetic and experienced canvasser of the two, and his success was so definitely assured before the close of the Fortieth Congress that Mr. Dawes withdrew, and himself made the motion in the Republican caucus that Mr. Blaine be nominated by acclamation. On the first day of the meeting of the Forty-first Congress, March 4, 1869, Mr. Blaine was chosen Speaker, by a strict party vote. He was also unanimously nominated to preside over the House in the Forty-second and Forty-third

Congresses, and at each election received the votes of all his party associates. Thus he completed a term of service — as he remarked in his valedictory address in 1875 — surpassed in length by but two of his predecessors, Henry Clay and Andrew Stevenson, and equalled by only two others, Nathaniel Macon and Schuyler Colfax.

Had Mr. Blaine been asked at the close of his political career to designate the period of his life which he recalled as the happiest, he would undoubtedly have declared that the six years of his speakership constituted that period. Perhaps no man ever experiences a prolonged season of uninterrupted and unclouded happiness. But certainly at no other time in Mr. Blaine's life were his tastes and wishes and aspirations so nearly satisfied as they were then. He had reached the height of his early ambition, and occupied a station absolutely congenial to him. If he had a hope, however vague, of attaining a higher place, it caused him not the least anxious thought at that time, and affected his life, whether public or private, in no degree. He could not help being conscious that he discharged the duties of his office with distinction, to the universal acceptation of political friends and foes, and with an easy mastery of the difficulties of the position. His faculty of making friends and of enlisting their

services in his behalf had turned the scale in his favor when the speakership was sought by two men of conspicuous ability; the place itself enlarged his opportunity to extend his acquaintance and to increase his influence over men and upon public affairs. Leadership was a passion with him; the consciousness of power gave him the keenest pleasure; and he was wise enough to retain his power by not abusing it.

Not only as a public man did he have ample reason to be contented with his situation. His home was always a delight to him, and at no time were his home and his family life more delightful to him than then. At Augusta he had transferred his residence from the contracted quarters in which he lived at first to a large old-fashioned mansion, with ample grounds, under the shadow of the State House. Upon his election as Speaker he bought a house in Washington. He was thus enabled to have his family always with him, and no public cares were permitted to interrupt his close and affectionate companionship with his wife and his large and interesting family of growing sons and daughters. Nor did he allow those cares to interfere with his abundant hospitality. He knew how to choose guests and to constitute parties made up of persons mutually congenial. He knew how to draw the line between such elaborate entertainment as

puts constraint upon both host and guest, and the careless take-us-as-you-find-us indifference which sends the diner away with a feeling that he has been only half-fed but wholly bored. His aptness at finding precisely the subject that most interested his guests, a wonderfully varied stock of information that could be brought effectively into use in the discussions and conversations, complete command of a fund of apt anecdote, and unusual skill as a *raconteur*, — all these faculties combined made him a charming host. His house was a resort of the brilliant men and women of whom so many are attracted to Washington during the sessions of Congress. He enjoyed his social success, but he enjoyed still more entertainment for its own sake, and the society of those whom he could assemble under his roof. He became one of the most popular public men in Washington, and manifestations of the esteem, the admiration, and the affection he inspired, of which he was conscious, yet at which he often modestly expressed his wonder, rounded out the happiness and contentment that marked this period of his life above all others. For at that time jealousy and political malignity had had no reason to scrutinize the minutest acts of his life in an effort to find something to his discredit. It is true that even then he was more than once forced to defend himself against assaults upon his

honor, but in each of the contests he succeeded in repelling the assault absolutely. The one most serious accusation against him — the one lightning bolt of the storm that beat upon him in his later years — had its origin during his term as Speaker, but neither that nor the more easily turned charges disturbed his serenity or detracted from his happiness at that time.

Mr. Blaine was master of his position from the day when he first took the gavel in his hand. He had the look and the bearing of a leader and commander. His strong and handsome features, his well-shaped person, his easy and graceful attitude, his penetrating voice, his thorough acquaintance with the rules of the sometimes turbulent body over which he presided, the quickness and keenness of his mind in perceiving the relation of a point of order to the particular rule that was invoked, and finally a personal magnetism that won for him the unavowed affection even of political opponents against whom he decided such points,[1] — all these characteristics made him a

[1] His private secretary, Mr. Sherman, informs the author that on one occasion, after a heated session at which Mr. Blaine had ruled steadily against Democratic filibustering, and had helped his own party to carry its point, he (Mr. Sherman) on leaving the Capitol in the dusk of early evening, passed two Southern Democratic members whom he recognized by their forms. As he passed he heard one of them remark to the other, "Now there 's Blaine — but damn him, I do love him."

model Speaker, one of three or four great occupants of the chair, hardly second to any one. No doubt the popularity of Mr. Clay was equal to that of Mr. Blaine. It is not easy to believe that it was superior. When we consider that the task set before a Speaker presents ever increasing difficulties as the number of members increases and as the volume of business is enlarged, it is evident that popularity was more easily won in Henry Clay's time than in Blaine's. At all events nothing could exceed the cordiality of Mr. Blaine's associates of both parties, when he laid down the gavel at the close of his service in 1875.[1]

Yet Blaine was a strong partisan, and used the power of his position more than did any of his predecessors, not merely to assist his own party to carry its measures and to defeat the obstructive tactics of the opposition, but also to promote or to hinder measures according as they did or

[1] In the House there was a most gratifying demonstration in favor of Speaker Blaine. As he spoke the last words of his valedictory and stepped down from the desk, the House rose in unison and every man joined with equal heartiness in a round of applause such as never was heard before in the Capitol. It had hardly died away when it swelled again into a perfect storm, accompanied by cheers, and soon for a third time the applause swept through the hall as the Speaker stood at the clerk's desk, bowing his thanks and shaking the hands of members who thronged about him. — Boston *Daily Advertiser*, March 5, 1875.

did not commend themselves to his individual judgment. In other words he constituted himself a political leader. True, Clay himself was a leader, while Speaker of the House, more than half a century before, but not as Speaker. When he had a point to make he addressed the House from the floor, in Committee of the Whole, simply as a member from Kentucky. Students of comparative government are aware, however, that the theory of the speakership differs in this country from that in nearly, if not quite, every other country. In almost all parliaments the presiding officer, although chosen by and himself a member of the ruling party, is expected to abjure partisanship altogether on assuming the chair. But in those parliaments the government is represented by the highest officers of state, who are the recognized leaders of the majority. In American representative assemblies there is no recognized leader, nor even a chosen body or committee which directs the course of public business and places an authoritative seal of approval or of disapproval upon measures brought before it. In such circumstances it is natural that the person elected by the majority to preside and to interpret the rules should assume, with the tacit consent of his fellows, as much authority over the proceedings as the inborn American jealousy of leadership will allow. The strong man goes a

little beyond his weaker predecessor; his own weak successor claims all that has been gained for the position; and so there is a steady development, and an evolution of power. Mr. Carlisle, the next strong Speaker after Mr. Blaine, added largely to the authority of the Chair. Mr. Reed, who was in some respects the most powerful personality ever placed in the position, carried his authority to an extreme; yet neither have his successors surrendered any of it, nor has the House expected, or intimated a desire for, such a surrender.

One of the most conspicuous instances of Mr. Blaine's use of his position to restrain his party associates occurred near the close of his first term as Speaker. He was one of the most conservative members of his party and strongly disapproved the radical policy toward the Southern States which was pressed upon the House by a group of Republicans of whom General Butler was the leader. On February 16, 1871, a bill was reported from the Reconstruction Committee in pursuance of that policy. Appropriation bills were occupying the attention of the House, since barely a fortnight of the short session remained. On February 28 General Butler obtained the floor and called up the bill. Not being a skilful parliamentarian, he neglected to move a suspension of the rules, but called for the reading of the

bill. While the clerk was reading it, Mr. Fernando Wood, of New York, moved a suspension of the rules to take up and pass a resolution abrogating the duty on coal. The Speaker allowed Mr. Wood to take the floor and entertained the motion, — which was adopted, — on the ground that General Butler surrendered the floor for the reading of the bill, that no member had the floor during the reading, and that Mr. Wood's motion was in order.

Apparently it was a new and undecided point of parliamentary law, and it is easy to see that a fairly strong argument might be made on either side. Moreover it is almost safe to say that Mr. Blaine's decision would have been against Mr. Wood if he had been strongly in favor of General Butler's bill and opposed to Mr. Wood's resolution. No appeal from the decision was taken, and no discussion of the point of order took place. After the coal duty question was decided, General Butler moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the consideration of the bill; but it was too late. The necessary two-thirds vote was not forthcoming, and the bill failed. Beyond a doubt it would have been passed if General Butler had not lost the floor through the ruling of the Speaker, who thus took the responsibility of thwarting the will of the House. Beyond a doubt also the Republicans themselves were glad after-

ward that the Speaker had saved them from making a grave political mistake.

His defeat rankled in General Butler's breast. The Forty-first Congress reached its constitutional term four days after the events just narrated; a new Congress assembled on the 4th of March; Mr. Blaine was again elected Speaker; and General Butler again offered his bill. Butler also secured the calling of a caucus of Republican members to consider the bill. The caucus was not generally attended, but those who were present voted that the bill should be passed at that session. Many members who were opposed to it withdrew before the vote was taken, seeing that they would be outvoted, and the decision of those who remained was unanimous. In order to head off the movement, Mr. Blaine drew a resolution providing for the appointment of a select committee to sit during the recess to investigate the condition of the Southern States. He took the resolution to General Butler, who suggested an amendment, but who promptly and hotly declined the chairmanship of the committee, for he saw that the purpose was to defeat his own scheme.

The resolution was presented by Mr. Blaine's colleague, Judge Peters, of Maine, and was adopted. Just before the close of the day's session, the Speaker appointed the committee for

which the resolution provided, with General Butler as chairman, and declared the House adjourned before any one had an opportunity to decline service. General Butler took the appointment, after he had refused to have anything to do with the committee,[1] as an affront, and prepared a long letter to his Republican associates, giving his reasons for his refusal, had the document printed and distributed through the House, and caused it to be telegraphed over the country. The General was skilled in the art of conveying insinuations without making direct charges, and in making most violent personal attacks in language which the person assailed could not resent without finding himself caught in a cunningly laid verbal trap.

Soon after the House met on the day after the resolution was passed, an occasion presented itself to General Butler to say on the floor, in more detail and with greater offensiveness, what he had said in his letter. His speech abounded in accusations of treachery and bad faith on the part of the Republicans who had voted for the resolution, and he was especially malignant toward the Speaker, whom he accused again and again of having played a trick on the House. Mr. Blaine called Mr. Shellabarger, of Ohio, to the

[1] He told the House that his reply to the Speaker's request that he serve as chairman was, "I'll be damned if I will."

chair, took the floor, and paid his respects to General Butler in terms which had not been approached for plainness of speech since his own famous retort upon Mr. Conkling. It was not dignified. Neither Mr. Blaine in his sharp defence of himself, nor General Butler in his rejoinder, was careful to choose words approved by parliamentary law and custom. Moreover it must be admitted that greater circumspection of speech is expected and is due from the Speaker than from any private member, — vastly more than was expected from General Butler, who carried to Congress the manners and the vocabulary of a police-court lawyer. The provocation to Mr. Blaine was great, for he was attacked for doing what, as a member of the House, he had a right to do; he was accused of springing a surprise when he had fully discussed the matter with the very person who brought the accusation; he was charged with party treachery in that he went against the decision of a caucus which he did not attend, although the fact that the party was, on the whole, on his side appeared in the vote on the resolution, which was supported by a majority of Republicans. Nevertheless, richly deserved as was his chastisement of Butler's arrogance, one cannot help regretting the whole incident. It is a striking commentary upon the General's lack of serious conviction, notwithstanding the violence

of his language, that on the very next day he went in a most amiable mood to the Speaker's desk and invited Mr. Blaine and members of his family to accompany him on an excursion to Fortress Monroe and Norfolk.

Upon another occasion, when also he had General Butler for an antagonist, Mr. Blaine exhibited the best qualities of his remarkable best. The Forty-third Congress was just expiring, the Democrats had already elected a large majority of the members of the next House of Representatives, and the unlimited power over legislation which the Republicans had exercised since 1861 was about to pass from them for a period of six years. It was the last month of Mr. Blaine's service as Speaker. The radicals among the Republicans were extremely anxious to place on the statute book a law regulating elections in the South, in order to prevent the whites from terrorizing the negroes and so capturing the state governments. However strongly Mr. Blaine may have sympathized with the purposes of the radicals, and certainly his sympathies were then and always on the side of the fullest political rights for the freedmen, he was not in favor of the drastic measure proposed for accomplishing the object. The "force bill" was reported by Mr. Coburn, of Indiana, February 18, 1875. On the 24th, at the beginning of the session of the House, there was

a contest between Mr. Coburn and General Garfield. Mr. Coburn wished the House to take up his bill; General Garfield, who was opposed to the force bill, asked for the consideration of the sundry civil appropriation bill. The House sustained Garfield by a vote of 147 to 101, the Democrats and conservative Republicans voting in the affirmative, the radical Republicans in the negative. After several hours' consideration of the appropriation bill, the House took a recess until evening, General Garfield, who made the motion, remarking, in explanation, "to enable me to go on with the sundry civil bill." Mr. Coburn moved to amend the motion so that the evening session should be devoted to the consideration of his bill, which bore the title, "a bill to provide against the invasion of States, to prevent the subversion of their authority, and to maintain the security of elections." The Speaker said that "that could not be done except by general consent." Mr. Randall objected on the ground that "we want to finish these appropriation bills."

The general understanding, then, was that the House would go into committee of the whole and continue its work upon the appropriation bill. Mr. Blaine designated a member to serve as Speaker *pro tempore* until the House went into committee, and attended a dinner party, intending to absent himself during the evening. Gen-

eral Butler quietly passed around word among his followers that by attending the evening session in force they could reverse the morning decision and secure consideration of the force bill. Accordingly, when General Garfield moved that the House go into committee of the whole, General Butler opposed the motion, and upon a call of the yeas and nays General Garfield was defeated. Thereupon the Democrats began filibustering, by the usual devices of motions to adjourn, and of breaking the quorum by withholding their votes.

Mr. Blaine was hastily sent for. He appeared suddenly in his place, during a roll-call, and assumed the gavel. He was in full evening dress, having gone directly from the dinner-table to the Capitol. That was a memorable session of the House. It began at half-past seven in the evening, and ended at four o'clock the next afternoon. During all that time Mr. Blaine remained at his post without rest. Refreshments were brought to him at the desk, and he did not leave the House for a moment save during the calling of the roll, which could not be interrupted by any member. At the close of the long contest he was "weary but alert," as one of the newspaper correspondents remarked. Seldom has a presiding officer been called upon to perform a more perplexing and thankless task. A large majority of the Repub-

lican members desired to bring the bill before the House. Some of them went to him and urged him to make rulings favorable to them. He refused emphatically to stretch the rules for their benefit. On the other hand, he decided many questions adversely to the Democrats. In short he presided with absolute impartiality. As soon as dilatory motions had been exhausted and the Republicans mustered a quorum of their own members, the contest was at an end, and Mr. Blaine firmly put down the filibustering which the Democrats endeavored to continue. His eminent fairness throughout the long session was generally recognized, and no doubt the members on both sides of the House remembered it when, a week later, they joined in the remarkable demonstration in his honor at the close of his service as Speaker.[1]

[1] Never during his whole service as Speaker of the House has Mr. Blaine displayed to better advantage his exceptional ability as a parliamentarian and presiding officer, or his power to dispose instantly of the most perplexing questions. His rulings invariably were approved by both sides of the House, and if the Democrats appealed from them, it was generally for the purpose of delay, and not because of any doubt as to the correctness of his decisions. — New York *Tribune*, February 26, 1875.

Notwithstanding the persuasion, blustering, and covert threats, Speaker Blaine discharged his duty with a consistency and impartiality for which the Republicans in the House may find reason to congratulate themselves. — Boston *Daily Advertiser*, same date.

In the important matter of committee appointments Mr. Blaine displayed excellent judgment and exercised great fairness. Many years after he had ceased to be Speaker the charge was brought against him, vaguely, that he had made corrupt appointments, by choosing members who would promote his own selfish interests. The two facts that no specific cases were ever mentioned, and that the charge was not brought against him during his incumbency of the office, by the most virulent political opponent, constitute a sufficient reason for rejecting the accusation as unworthy of belief. At the same time its vagueness renders a formal refutation of it impossible. But it may be added that no measure was before Congress during Mr. Blaine's Speakership, the passage or defeat of which would affect his personal interest. Again, the accusation is an attack upon the personal honor of every member of Congress who may have been supposed to accept a committee appointment under an obligation to favor the Speaker's private interests.

In one important case Mr. Blaine's appointment of a committee was greatly criticised. There was a strong tariff-reform movement within the Republican party in 1871. The sentiment was especially rife in the West. In appointing the Committee of Ways and Means of the Forty-second Congress Mr. Blaine designated one tariff-

reform Republican, who, with the Democrats, constituted a majority of the committee. Although Mr. Dawes, a stout protectionist, was made chairman, he was virtually without authority, and was outvoted. This action by a Speaker who was a life-long protectionist many Republicans deemed strange and somewhat disloyal. And perhaps their indignation was justified. Whatever may be said on that point, in the end it led to a moderate and judicious reduction of the tariff, and to the defeat of extremists on both sides of the question.

It has already been remarked that Mr. Blaine's public life was marked by many dramatic and spectacular events and scenes. The Conkling incident, and the encounter with General Butler which has just been described, were two such occurrences. Another such occurrence belongs to the speakership period. Several assaults were made upon him during his public life on the ground that he had been pecuniarily concerned in the stock and bonds of railroads which had been favored by Congress, and had received such bonds either as a gratuity or at a price below the market, in consideration of his services as a member of Congress. The first of these accusations represented him as having received large amounts of the stock of the Union Pacific Railroad Company. It was made in 1872, in the New York

"Tribune," then still under the editorship of Horace Greeley, who was the Democratic candidate for President in that year. Mr. Blaine not only denied the charge in the most emphatic and sweeping terms, in a public speech at Cleveland, but asserted that he had never been interested directly or indirectly, to the amount of a single dollar, in the stock of the company; and he further called attention to the fact that the favors — loan of credit and land grant — of Congress to the company had been bestowed before he was even a candidate for Congress. The assault upon Mr. Blaine failed absolutely; and not long after his speech the "Tribune" frankly and fully withdrew its accusation.

At about the same time the famous Crédit Mobilier charges were made against him and many other members of both Houses of Congress. The Crédit Mobilier was a company organized to construct the Union Pacific Railroad. The railroad company itself could not, or at least did not, raise the funds necessary to build the line. The construction was a vast undertaking and required financial courage and responsibility many times as great as would be called for at the present day. Oakes Ames, a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts, was at the head of the railroad company, and also of the Crédit Mobilier. The construction com-

pany carried out its contract and made a large profit upon it, — a detail which loomed much larger before the eyes of the generation which witnessed the occurrences than its logical importance justified. For if Mr. Ames had lost money instead of adding as he did to a previously large fortune, he would have had the sympathy of the people as one who had courageously engaged in a great and patriotic enterprise, when others turned from it, and who had been ruined when he should have reaped a rich reward.

The basis of the accusation against members of Congress was a note-book of Mr. Ames, in which were entered the initials of such members, and opposite each the amount of dividend on Crédit Mobilier stock which he was supposed to have received. Mr. Blaine's initials were in the list. The theory of the accusers, which was to a certain extent correct, was that Mr. Ames represented to members that the enterprise would be profitable, that he offered to each a certain amount of stock, that the shares were never paid for, but that Mr. Ames, having nominally sold the shares to them, paid the dividend upon the fictitious investment. Some of those who were accused acknowledged boldly that the above account of what took place was true as to themselves, and declared that the transaction was honorable, certainly not dishonorable. Others, who had

really received Mr. Ames's money, denied that they had been concerned in the business. It is a singular circumstance that the political career of every man who denied falsely his participation in the proceeds of Crédit Mobilier stock, was brought to an abrupt close; but that all who openly avowed that the accusation was true, and maintained that no wrong had been done, remained in public life and were in no wise injured by the affair.

On the first day of the third session of the Forty-second Congress Mr. Blaine called to the chair Mr. S. S. Cox, of New York, one of the most prominent Democrats in the House, and, after reciting the accusation of bribery and the list of the accused, offered a resolution for the appointment of a select committee to investigate the whole matter. The result of the inquiry, which was prosecuted mercilessly, so far as Mr. Blaine was concerned, was a complete exoneration of the Speaker from any interest or participation in the affair. As has been intimated, many honorable reputations were wrecked when the evidence taken was made public. Yet Oakes Ames was incapable of bribing or attempting to bribe a fellow member, and he was far too shrewd a man to purchase support of an enterprise which was unanimously approved by the whole country, and which had no favors to ask of Congress. But

public sentiment, illogically ignoring these facts, demanded scapegoats, and the House of Representatives furnished them from its own membership. Mr. Ames went speedily to his grave in unmerited disgrace, and the juster and truer view of his conduct came too late.[1]

One incident of Mr. Blaine's career as Speaker, in which his character as a man as well as his conduct as a presiding officer appears in a striking manner, should not be omitted. In the Forty-second Congress a persistent movement was made for a general increase of salaries. The proposition encountered determined opposition, and the bill to carry it into effect narrowly escaped defeat on several occasions. The strength of the measure lay largely in the evident propriety of increasing the salary of the President, which had not been changed in amount since it was originally established in the time of Washington. The salaries of the justices of the Supreme Court were also extremely low. Those who managed the affair were resolved that the manifest justice of increasing these salaries should cover also an increase of the compensation of senators and

[1] In 1880 an attempt was made to revive the odium of the Crédit Mobilier revelations for the purpose of defeating General Garfield for the presidency. The number "329" was posted on walls and chalked upon pavements all over the country, to imply that General Garfield had sold his honor to Mr. Ames for the paltry sum of $329.

representatives. If they had been content with making the increase of the pay of members begin at the same time that the President's enlarged salary was to go into effect, there would undoubtedly have been less popular indignation than was actually aroused. They were not so content, but provided in the bill that the congressional salary should be retroactive, and that senators and members of the existing Congress should be paid at the rate of seven thousand five hundred dollars from the 4th of March, 1871. This was an increase of fifty per cent., and was virtually a vote of a gratuity of five thousand dollars to each member, who had already served within a month of the two years' term.

When the bill was pending in the House, Mr. Blaine, who was strongly opposed to the "salary grab," as it was universally called, asked unanimous consent to put the word "hereafter" after the words "shall receive" in fixing the salary of the Speaker at ten thousand dollars. Without that change the Speaker would, for two years, have received higher compensation than the Vice-President or the members of the Cabinet. "The Chair hears no objection," said the Speaker. It was a case of wilful deafness, for two members sprang to their feet to object. Mr. Blaine calmly wrote the word "hereafter" in the bill, and the amendment was made without a vote of the

House. In the Senate the phraseology was changed, but it still had the effect of excepting the Speaker from the retroactive feature of the increase. When, therefore, the popular outcry against the "grab" resounded through the country, and members who had taken the extra pay were hastily returning it, to be covered into the Treasury, Mr. Blaine had no apologies to make and no excess of compensation to be returned. The country fell upon bad times during the recess of Congress, for the terrible financial disaster of 1873 occurred in September, wrecked fortunes, and prostrated business. The new Congress made haste to repeal the whole of the salary act of March 4, 1873, except so much as related to the President and the justices of the Supreme Court, who are protected by express provisions of the Constitution from a diminution of their salaries during their continuance in office.

Astute politician as Mr. Blaine was, he did not foresee the Republican reverse of 1874. For once the indication of the election in Maine, in September, was misleading. That state returned all the members of Congress by the usual majorities, and in the vote for governor and legislature seemed to forecast a general Republican victory in November. But a complete political revolution was impending, and the new House of Representatives was controlled by the Democrats by a ma-

jority of almost two thirds. There were few Republican survivors of the "carpet-baggers," "scallawags," and colored men who had represented Southern States, and the Democrats made serious inroads upon the delegations of the strongest Republican states of the North. For the first time since he entered public life Mr. Blaine found himself in opposition.

VI

MINORITY LEADER — THE MULLIGAN LETTERS

WHATEVER may have been the causes of the overwhelming reverse which the Republicans suffered in 1874, not one of them can justly be charged in any degree upon Mr. Blaine. The rigorous policy of Congress toward the South brought about a revulsion of feeling in the Northern States which contributed much to the result, but Mr. Blaine was universally recognized as one of the leaders of the faction which opposed that policy. Although a most earnest supporter of the system of protection, he had gone even to the point of exposing himself to the charge of treachery to the cause, in an effort to satisfy the tariff-reformers without yielding the principle. If his judgment had prevailed, the free trade sentiment would have had far less influence than it actually exercised in assisting the political revolution. Popular indignation was aroused by the large expenditures sanctioned by Congress, which were regarded as reckless and extravagant, and were suspected to be tainted with corruption. As a private member and as Speaker, Mr. Blaine

always stood on the side of economy, and in the closing hours of each session, when schemers found members for the most part careless and indulgent, he was the "watch-dog" who prevented plunder of the Treasury, not by an audible objection which is to be found in the published proceedings, but by the more effectual method of refusing recognition to members who wished to secure consideration of measures that would not survive the ordeal of debate.

There were several other causes of the political disaster, chargeable neither upon Mr. Blaine nor upon Congress as a whole. The scandal of the whiskey frauds involved persons so near to the President that a part of the odium fell unjustly upon him and threw discredit upon the administration. Worst of all, the terrible financial panic of 1873 left the country in precisely that condition of business depression and despair which is always most favorable for an opposition party. Against this formidable combination of adverse circumstances the Republican party was unable to stand, and it fell.

The Forty-fourth Congress assembled on the 6th of December, 1875. The state of parties in the House of Representatives was indicated nearly accurately by the vote for Speaker. Mr. Kerr of Indiana received the support of 173 members, Mr. Blaine of 106. But before the

House had been in session three hours, Mr. Blaine had confronted the Democratic majority and had won a parliamentary victory. The question was upon the admission of a member-elect from Louisiana as having *prima facie* a right to the seat. Louisiana was for a long time one of the chief storm-centres during the disturbances of the Civil War and the reconstruction period. A year or two before the meeting of the new Congress a state of affairs developed in Louisiana not wholly unlike that of a revolution in one of the Spanish republics on the other side of the Gulf of Mexico. Two persons claimed the governorship and there were rival legislatures. After an investigation had been made, a compromise was effected to which many of the Democrats in Congress consented. William P. Kellogg, Republican, was recognized as governor, and the Democrats were permitted to organize and control the legislature.

Louisiana was entitled to six members of the House. Four of the members elect presented credentials signed by both claimants of the governorship. One, whose seat was uncontested, offered credentials signed by Governor Kellogg alone. For the seat for the fifth district Frank Morey offered credentials authenticated by Governor Kellogg; William B. Spencer presented a certificate of election attested by John McEnery, the Democratic candidate for governor. When

the members elect were being sworn in, Mr. Fernando Wood of New York asked that Mr. Morey stand aside, and accordingly he was not permitted to take the oath with the other members of the delegation. After the rest of the members had been sworn in, Mr. Wood offered a resolution referring both certificates to the Committee on Elections, with instructions to report as speedily as possible which of the claimants should be admitted to the seat.

Mr. Blaine antagonized the resolution on the ground that it implied that the question who was governor of Louisiana was still open to doubt. He said that no department of the national government had recognized Mr. McEnery as governor. Furthermore he called the attention of the House to the significance of the fact that one member had already been sworn in on the strength of a certificate from Governor Kellogg only; and to the remark of Mr. Wood that "it was unchallenged," he retorted, "but if the governor of Louisiana is not competent to give a certificate, why should not it have been challenged?" A warm debate ensued, which was participated in by leading members on both sides of the House. In deference to strong objections to the original form of the resolution, it was modified, and provided simply for the reference of Mr. Morey's credentials, with instructions to the

committee to report on his *prima facie* right to a seat. On the first test vote the Democrats had a majority of one only, but they could not pass the resolution. Mr. Blaine then took charge of the matter and offered a resolution that Mr. Morey be sworn in as a member of the House, which was passed without a division.

This was but one of several occasions on which Blaine displayed a remarkable adroitness of parliamentary strategy that enabled him to carry his point on a party question in a body politically opposed to him. In accomplishing this feat he was aided greatly by the weakness — attributable solely to the inexperience — of his opponents. They had been in a minority so long, most of them during their whole public lives, that they had learned only the tactics of opposition. They knew how to obstruct and to defeat a measure, not how to carry it. Mr. Blaine, on the other hand, was equally versed in both arts. Indeed his first training in public affairs, as a journalist, was as a stout opponent of the administrations of Pierce and Buchanan, and all his life he was never a more redoubtable antagonist than when he could recur to the language of denunciation and ridicule.

It was but a few days after this that Mr. Blaine involved the House in a bitter political controversy which must have had a great influence upon

his personal fortunes as a public man. In the management of the affair he displayed high parliamentary strategy and carried his point in an assembly in which his party was in a minority. The fact that Mr. Blaine has included his principal speech on that occasion in his collected volume of "Political Discussions" is doubtless sufficient evidence that upon mature reflection he did not see reason to regret his course. But not at that time nor afterward have Blaine's friends been all of the opinion that his action was well for him or well for the country. They did and do admire the cleverness with which he threw his political enemies into confusion, the eloquence with which he advocated his cause, and the skill with which he used the rules of the House to accomplish his purpose. The political expediency of his course, and the usefulness of the object which he had in view, are open to doubt.

Mr. Randall of Pennsylvania introduced a bill removing the disability to hold office, imposed by the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution, from all those upon whom the disability still rested. Mr. Blaine wished to offer an amendment excepting Jefferson Davis from the operation of the bill, and making it a condition as to all other persons that they should be relieved of the disability upon appearing in a court of record and taking an oath of allegiance to the United

States. Mr. Randall refused to allow the amendment to be offered, but demanded "the previous question," which would cut off the right to amend. He then claimed the floor for an hour, but was nonplussed when he was reminded that the mover of the previous question was entitled to the hour only as to bills reported from a committee, and this was a bill which no committee had considered. The House was therefore brought without debate to a vote on the passage of the bill. A two-thirds vote was required by the provisions of the Constitution, and that, of course, the Democrats were unable to obtain. The vote was 175 ayes, 97 noes.

Under the usage of the House the leader of the prevailing side succeeded to the management of the measure. Mr. Blaine moved a reconsideration of the vote rejecting the bill and took the floor to debate the question. He gave notice of his intention, in case the vote should be reconsidered, to offer his amendment as a substitute. It was upon this question that the discussion presently to be mentioned took place. It was evidently a discussion which the Democrats would gladly have avoided and which they desired to bring to an end as speedily as possible. This is not to imply that they felt that their argumentative defence was weak. They were too well aware of the persistence of Northern sentiment, of the

ease with which the passions of the civil war could be revived, and of Mr. Blaine's ability as a debater, to relish the discussion at all. Accordingly Mr. Randall gave notice that he was about to call the previous question on Mr. Blaine's motion to reconsider the rejection of the bill. Mr. Blaine resisted the move as displacing him from the management of the question and therefore contrary to usage; but the Speaker decided against him. After the previous question had been agreed to, Mr. Randall gave the floor to Mr. Banks of Massachusetts, who proposed to offer an amendment to the original bill embodying one part of Mr. Blaine's amendment, — that which made amnesty conditional upon the taking of an oath, in court, to support and defend the Constitution. The admission of the Banks amendment required unanimous consent, and Mr. Blaine objected. Mr. Randall then moved to refer the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the bill with the Banks amendment, and to this the House agreed.

When the bill was reported back, the next day, in accordance with the instructions, the previous question was called upon it at once, and again it was rejected, ayes 184, noes 97, — not two thirds. Again the management of the question fell to Mr. Blaine, who at once moved a reconsideration

of the vote rejecting the bill, and asked unanimous consent to present his own amendment. Mr. Randall objected, and a brief but interesting debate took place, in which Mr. Blaine said that he was in favor of an amnesty bill that could be passed, and Mr. Randall retorted that the gentleman from Maine was not sincere in the least degree. When Mr. Randall persisted in his objection, Mr. Blaine withdrew the motion to reconsider, and the contest was at an end. No amnesty bill was passed.

Such is the parliamentary history of the incident. The speech of Mr. Blaine, with which the debate began, was a terrible arraignment of Jefferson Davis as "the author, knowingly, deliberately, guiltily, and wilfully, of the gigantic murders and crimes at Andersonville." This is not the place to set forth even in brief the statements and arguments by which he sustained this thesis, nor to give the denials, the counter-statements and the counter-accusations with which he was met by the Democrats, North and South. The questions then discussed are either closed forever or mercifully suffered to remain unanswered. It is much easier at the present time than it was in 1875, in weighing the considerations for and against Mr. Blaine's cause, to decide that his action was unwise and that it tended to reopen sores that should have been poulticed and

bandaged. No doubt it was galling to him and to thousands of men who had conducted public affairs during the civil war, to see more than one fifth of the seats in the House occupied by men who had been in arms against the government. No doubt it was in their view a travesty of justice that the few hundred men still left under the disabilities imposed by the fourteenth amendment, upon whom those disabilities rested solely because they had not asked to be relieved, and that he in particular who was to the Union army the head and front of offending, should have pardon thrust upon them. Moreover, it is to be remembered that a presidential election was approaching. Those who had carried the country through the war, and had established its policy after the conflict ceased, were warned by the election of 1874 that there was serious danger that the policy would be reversed. It seemed to Mr. Blaine the surest way to avert that which they regarded as a great calamity, to recall to the minds of the Northern people the sufferings of their sons on Southern battlefields and in Southern prison camps. Mr. Blaine himself was already regarded as the most probable candidate of the Republican party for President. Moreover, as the leader of the minority in the House, it was for him, if for any one, to revive the sentiments which would, it was hoped, restore Republican

ascendancy and prevent the results of the war from being prematurely put in peril.

On the other hand the country needed peace and speedy extinction of the passions that for a half-century and more had smouldered, glimmered, and burst into a blaze, that had been hidden behind a screen of compromise, that had burned more fiercely when the screen was torn away, that had threatened the whole land with destruction, and that now, from exhaustion of fuel, might die out if no one fanned the embers. It was asking much to propose that the President of the Confederate States, who had not asked for amnesty, whether or not he desired it, should be restored to the full enjoyment of every right of citizenship, so that he might have returned, without apology or regret for the part he had taken in the civil war, to the seat which he had quitted formally, as a self-declared alien, fourteen years before. Nevertheless, he would probably have scorned to accept amnesty, and would almost certainly have refused to reënter public life. In any event, the election of Mr. Davis to the Senate would have aroused again the war-time sentiments of the Northern people far more effectually than Mr. Blaine's eloquent recital of the terrible accusation brought against him could do it.

If Mr. Blaine's opposition to absolute, general, and unconditional amnesty was purely

political, we must not forget that the proposal of it was equally so. One man only of all those who had asked Congress for a removal of his disabilities had been refused, and in every case the person amnestied had himself petitioned for the relief. The same way of relief was open to those, much less than a thousand in number, upon whom the disability still rested. Consequently the advocates of a measure which reversed the previous policy cannot be exonerated from a share of the unpleasantness which resulted from their act. But in fact both those who approved and those who disapproved the raising of the controversy held Mr. Blaine solely responsible for it. Most of the Republican newspapers — all those of radical tendencies — shouted with glee at the success of the former Speaker in defeating "the southern brigadiers." On the other hand, all the Democrats, and not a few Republicans who wished the thoughts of the people to be turned away from the Southern question and toward other great topics of national policy, deprecated a course which soon came to be characterized by the expressive phrase "waving the bloody shirt."

It is difficult to determine the ultimate effect upon his own political fortunes of Mr. Blaine's speech on Jefferson Davis. On the whole, the effect seems to have been harmful. Prior to that incident he was justly classed among conserva-

tive Republicans, and as one who had more than once stood between the conquered Southern whites and those who wished to keep them in subjection. By his speech he imperilled if he did not forfeit that reputation, and in the ensuing contests he found his most determined opponents in his own party, among those with whom he had been accustomed to coöperate. Moreover, before that time there was a not unkindly feeling toward him on the part of many influential Democrats. It is certain that the relentlessness with which they attacked and pursued him a few months later was intensified by the recollection of his imperious bearing on that occasion. On the other hand, it must be said that his course gained him immense popularity in his own party, — great and lasting, but not universal popularity. From the moment when he delivered the speech until the time of his death he was the most conspicuous Republican in all the land, the man whose partisans were more ardent, devoted, and numerous than were those of any other man. But he was also the man of all others upon whom the whole party could not unite, and the man whom his political opponents would take the greatest delight in defeating. In short, before that time he had hardly a political enemy; after it he had no respite from conflict with enemies more numerous and more implacable than those of any other public man of our time.

It has been remarked that Mr. Blaine was already looked upon as a promising candidate for the Republican nomination for President at the election of 1876. General Grant was completing his second term, and although there was some talk of a third term for him, the movement was not strong. The way seemed open for a new man. A resolution offered by Mr. Springer of Illinois, early in the session, placed Mr. Blaine in a peculiar position. The resolution expressed the opinion of the House that any departure from the time-honored custom by which presidents retired from office after a second term "would be unwise, unpatriotic, and fraught with peril to our free institutions." Mr. Blaine was in the House, but did not answer to his name; the resolution was passed, ayes 233, noes 18. A member asked, during the roll-call, for a reading of the rule which requires members who are present to vote. He raised a laugh at Mr. Blaine's expense, but Mr. Cox, who was in the chair, decided that there was no way to enforce the rule. In fact, no one was more strongly opposed than was Mr. Blaine to a third term, but to vote for the resolution might have been regarded as helping to remove an obstacle in his own path.

Early in this same session of Congress an invitation was extended, on behalf of the managers of the Centennial Exhibition, to the President,

his Cabinet, and all the members of both Houses of Congress, to visit Philadelphia and inspect the progress made in preparing the grounds and buildings of the exhibition. They were conveyed to Philadelphia in special trains and were entertained with the most lavish hospitality. After a great banquet in one of the fair buildings, there was speaking. The reception accorded to Mr. Blaine, as he rose before the great assembly to respond to the call upon him, was one of extraordinary cordiality and enthusiasm, and was regarded as an incident of great significance.

All at once he met a check in his triumphant progress. He was thrown upon the defensive by the most serious accusation that was ever brought against him. Wholly disproved in one form, it was revived in another, and led to fresh charges that were made, reiterated, and amplified by political and personal enemies. A volume would be needed to present and discuss adequately the facts and insinuations regarding such of Mr. Blaine's private affairs as were deemed of public importance in the spring of 1876, and in 1884, when he was a candidate for the presidency. Any summary, however full, of the matters in controversy will seem to the most candid and thorough student, still more to the earnest ad-

herents and opponents of Mr. Blaine, to omit things essential to a just judgment; and any conclusion which holds Mr. Blaine neither wholly blameless nor deserving of the harsh epithets showered upon him by his enemies, is sure to be unsatisfactory to every man who has engaged in the controversy.

In the early spring of 1876 rumors began to be circulated among politicians that revelations were soon to be made that would ruin forever the prospects of a prominent candidate for President, and it soon became known that Mr. Blaine was to be the victim. When the public mind had been sufficiently impressed with the idea that the disclosures were to be of the most damaging character, the accusation was made public. It was stated on the authority of a government director of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, that the company had purchased $75,000 of the bonds of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company belonging to Mr. Blaine, and had paid for them the sum of $64,000. No one would deny that it would be an act of great impropriety, to use no stronger word, for the Speaker of the House of Representatives to dispose of bonds at much beyond their market value — for the interest on the bonds had not been paid for several years — to a company so often favored by congressional action as was the

Union Pacific. Mr. Blaine took the most effectual means to disprove his connection with the transaction. He obtained letters from Thomas A. Scott, who was President of the Union Pacific in 1871, when, it was admitted, the company bought the bonds; from Sidney Dillon, his successor in the presidency of the road, who was a director and a member of the executive committee in 1871; from E. H. Rollins, the treasurer; and from Morton, Bliss & Co., the bankers through whom the draft for the purchase money was negotiated. With one accord, in the most comprehensive and sweeping manner, they denied that the transaction was with Mr. Blaine or that he had any interest in it or in the proceeds of it.

Armed with these letters Mr. Blaine rose to a personal explanation, in the House of Representatives, on April 24, recited the accusation against himself, and read the testimony of these men, all honorable and truthful gentlemen, who were conversant with the whole business. It cannot be disputed that, unless they were all guilty of plain and deliberate falsehood, this, the main and original accusation against Mr. Blaine, stands absolutely disproved. Nevertheless it was revived eight years later, elaborate calculations were made, in political pamphlets scattered broadcast through the country, of the amount of Little Rock bonds originally held by Mr. Blaine, and

of his disposition of them, to show that he had seventy-five bonds that could not be accounted for — that is to say, bonds that his critics could not account for. To sustain the charge it was necessary to impeach the veracity of Colonel Scott,[1] who testified under oath that the bonds were his own, purchased of Josiah Caldwell before he had anything to do with the Union Pacific road, and that the company took them off his hands at more than the market price as a way of remunerating him for his services as president. Certainly, only those who can believe nothing good of Mr. Blaine will maintain that he was not entitled to a verdict of absolute innocence as to this transaction.

In his statement to the House Mr. Blaine gave so much of an account as he deemed necessary of his connection with the Little Rock and Fort Smith enterprise. He did not tell the whole story. No one at that time, and he least of all, could have anticipated that his personal affairs would be investigated, that his correspondence would be analyzed, that his spoken words would be studied and discussed, in the spirit of a prosecuting attorney endeavoring to convict an ac-

[1] "Is the statement of a man who admits that he was guilty of such a transaction entitled to confidence?" — *Mr. Blaine's Record*, published by the Boston Committee of One Hundred, 1884, p. 4.

cused person by circumstantial evidence. It was for him an unfortunate fact that the transaction, which was strictly honorable on his part, which, indeed, reflected great credit upon his sense of honor, was also one which for more than one reason he preferred not to tell in all its details. For one thing, his pride forbade that he should reveal the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of one who professed to be his friend, and the "agony" — it was his own word — he had endured in his efforts to hold harmless those whom he had led into the enterprise. Moreover, he was far from wishing that those friends should know that he had a contract by the terms of which he was to receive a handsome commission for disposing of the securities of the Little Rock road. To be sure, he offered them securities which, if the road had been successful, would have made a highly profitable investment of the money they paid for them, and he agreed to, and afterward did, assume the loss which might result if the road failed. Nevertheless, it could not be agreeable to him to have his political friends made aware that he had been acting as a paid agent for the sale of the bonds. Such blame as must attach to him in connection with the affair arises from his so acting as an agent — a matter, it will be seen, concerning solely his relations with his friends in Maine, and in no wise his integrity as

a public man — and from his efforts, unavailing in the end, to conceal the fact.

From the testimony given before the Committee on the Judiciary on the investigation ordered by the House of Representatives, May 2, 1876, and from the published correspondence on the subject, a chronological account of the whole affair may be made.

Two of Mrs. Blaine's brothers were merchants in Boston, Jacob and Eben C. Stanwood. It was by the financial assistance afforded by one or both of them that Mr. Blaine had been able to purchase his interest in the "Kennebec Journal" when he removed to Maine. James Mulligan was the confidential clerk of Jacob Stanwood; Warren Fisher, Jr., was the business partner of Eben. Mr. Blaine and Mr. Fisher were friends and were closely associated in some business enterprises. Among other things Mr. Blaine became interested with Fisher, in 1861, before he was even a candidate for Congress, in the Spencer Rifle Company, which had a contract for the sale of arms to the government. In 1863 he gave a note to Fisher for the stock he had purchased. In 1864 he wrote a letter to Fisher explaining the meaning of a proposed amendment to a bill pending in Congress, to the effect that "where the government had contracted for the delivery of a specific article of manufacture, and after the con-

tract was made with the government, an additional tax was levied on that article, the government should stand the loss, and not the seller," [1] — surely a reasonable and just provision. The provision was of advantage to the Spencer Rifle Company, which was thus subjected to increased taxation on rifles which it had contracted to make for the army. Mr. Blaine's connection with the Spencer Rifle Company was never made the basis of any direct accusation against him, but it was used insinuatingly as cumulative evidence of his alleged use of his public position to promote his private fortunes. But there was nothing in his connection with that company that would tarnish the reputation of the most scrupulous statesman.

In June, 1869, Mr. Blaine received from Mr. Fisher a proposition to engage in another enterprise, the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. Nearly ten years before the Civil War Congress passed an act granting public lands in some of the states to the states themselves, to aid in the construction of railroads, and giving the right of way over the public land to such roads as should be built under the terms of the act. Arkansas incorporated the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company, and granted a part of the lands received from Congress, conditioned upon the building of

[1] Mr. Blaine's explanation. — *Congressional Record*, 1st Sess., 44th Cong., p. 3605.

the road. Nothing was done under the act of incorporation. After the war closed, in 1865–66, Congress regranted the lands to the Southern States. Again the Arkansas Legislature incorporated the company and granted a land subsidy. It was not until 1868, after local attempts had failed, that the charter came into the hands of a group of Boston men, at the head of whom was Josiah Caldwell; and associated with him was Warren Fisher, Jr. A certain amount of capital was raised, and the work of constructing the road began. The act of 1866 required, as a condition of the free right of way over the public land, that twenty miles of the road should be constructed within three years. The time limit would expire on July 28, 1869. The promoters of the road went to Congress and asked that the time limit be extended to three years from the filing of the certificate of incorporation, the date of which was May 13, 1867, which would give them nine and a half months more.

A bill having this provision, and this only, was introduced in the Senate, at the first session of the Forty-first Congress, was reported favorably, and passed on April 6, 1869, without a word of opposition. "It will not take half a minute," said Senator Rice of Arkansas in urging the Senate to take up the bill. On being sent to the House of Representatives it went to "the Speaker's table,"

in other words to a calendar from which, upon the adoption of a motion to proceed to the business on the Speaker's table, bills were taken up and disposed of strictly in the order in which they were placed on the calendar. Three days later, April 9, only one day before the final adjournment, the House took up this calendar. The Little Rock bill was the fifth item of business. When it was reached Mr. Julian of Indiana moved an amendment requiring the railroad company to sell the lands to actual settlers only, at a maximum price per acre. Mr. Holman of the same state moved to refer the bill to a committee, which motion, if carried, would defeat the bill, inasmuch as the time limit would expire before the beginning of the next session. The House showed that it was in favor of the bill by rejecting Holman's motion, ayes 40, noes 78. Mr. Julian then made another motion to amend by incorporating in the bill a provision granting a right of way also to the Memphis, El Paso & Pacific Railroad. This also would have been fatal to the bill, for the Memphis enterprise had been before the Senate and had encountered opposition there.

At this juncture the friends of the bill went to the Speaker for assistance, as it was natural and proper for them to do; and it was also proper for him to give his help. In the closing hours of

a session business must be transacted quickly if at all, and every Speaker does all that is in his power to facilitate the passage of unobjectionable measures. The Speaker informed the anxious friends of the bill that Julian's second amendment was not in order. When Mr. Roots of Arkansas hesitated to make the point of order, as he was not familiar with the rules, Mr. Blaine sent word to General Logan of Illinois to raise the point. He did so, and the Speaker promptly ruled out the amendment on two grounds, the first of which was all-sufficient: that "it is expressly prohibited by the rule, that where a land grant is under consideration another grant to a different company shall be entertained." In order to save time, the first amendment proposed by Julian was allowed to be made, without a division, as it would meet with no opposition in the Senate; and the bill was passed by a vote of 79 to 28.[1]

Nearly three months afterward, toward the end of June, negotiations were begun between

[1] An act was subsequently passed repealing the proviso relating to the sale of public lands. Mr. Blaine in referring to this second act said that it was to correct a mistake — a phrase which his persistent critics declared to be a falsehood. Yet it was strictly true. The company received its land grant from the State of Arkansas, not from the United States, and Congress had no right to prescribe the terms on which the land should be sold.

Blaine and Fisher, which were referred to in a letter from Mr. Blaine as "your offer to admit me to a participation in the new railroad enterprise," which he deemed "in every respect as generous as I could expect or desire;" and he remarked in closing his letter, "I do not feel that I shall prove a dead-head in the enterprise, if I once embark in it. I see various channels in which I know I can be useful." These sentences were often quoted, with abundant sneers, in the discussion of the "Mulligan letters," as if they conveyed a suggestion that Mr. Blaine was contemplating the commission of "various" improprieties in order not to be a "dead-head." The natural, obvious, and, in view of what took place afterward, the only possible interpretation to be put upon his words, was that he was confident that he could dispose of the securities of the road to many investors, and his services in that direction, not his services as a public man, were the consideration for his being admitted to a share in the enterprise.

Fisher had evidently intimated to Blaine that Caldwell might do more than make a favorable contract for the sale of the railroad bonds. It was a common if not a universal custom at that time for those who controlled a charter for the building of a railroad which was aided by a government subsidy in land or bonds, to divide

the whole interest into a certain number of shares, and, as owners of the franchise, to compensate themselves by a system which had the practical effect of taking a commission on all the securities sold. No one at the present day would defend the practice; but in the time of extensive railroad construction, when great risks were incurred in building lines into uninhabited wildernesses and across barren plains, no one objected to it or regarded it as dishonorable. The shares of the owners of franchises were often subdivided in order to bring new elements of financial strength to an undertaking. In Blaine's letter to Fisher he referred to a suggestion that Caldwell might turn over to him a part of one of the "bed-rock" shares, and expressed a hope that Caldwell "would make the proposition definite." He feared that if the proposition were postponed until the success of the enterprise was assured, Caldwell "might grow reluctant to part with the share."

Mr. Blaine began at once to work in the "various channels" he had foreseen, without waiting to make a formal contract with Fisher. By September he had disposed of securities that would bring to the company $130,000 in money; and on September 5 Fisher made a contract by which, upon the payment of the money he was to deliver to those to whom Blaine had disposed

of the securities $1000 in the first mortgage bonds of the company, ten shares of preferred stock, and ten shares of common stock for each $1000 paid, and Blaine was himself to receive, upon the fulfilment of the contract, $130,000 of land grant mortgage bonds, and $32,500 of first mortgage bonds. One of the subscribers withdrew after making a single payment, and the actual amount of money paid under the contract was $125,000. There were afterward four other contracts, covering $35,000 of first mortgage bonds, $28,000 of land bonds, and both preferred and common stock, for disposing of which Mr. Blaine was to receive compensation in money.

Many letters passed between Fisher and Blaine while these transactions were in progress. The only ones which it is necessary to notice here are those which relate to the charge most frequently brought against Blaine. The definite proposition which Caldwell was expected to make was not made. In order to "jog his memory" Blaine wrote to Fisher, in October, 1869, an account of the incident in the House at the close of the preceding session. He wrote that he "could not do otherwise than sustain it,"—the point of order against Julian's amendment; and "at that time I had never seen Mr. Caldwell; but you can tell him that without knowing it I did him a great favor." In another letter he

enclosed a clipping from the "Congressional Globe" containing the official account of the affair, and again he said, "Of course it was my plain duty to make the ruling when the point was thus raised." This second letter was intended for Caldwell's eye, "if you think it expedient," as he wrote to Fisher by the same mail. "I have endeavored in writing it not to be *indelicate*." There is no evidence on the point whether Fisher ever showed the letters or the clipping from the "Globe" to Mr. Caldwell. At all events Caldwell did not turn over any share of the franchise-owners' "bed-rock" privileges. It is difficult for one who is not previously convinced that Blaine was guilty of impropriety in the whole transaction to see in this incident of it anything reprehensible. Undoubtedly he was anxious to bring Caldwell to terms, and greatly desired a share in the profits of the franchise. He said so, in these letters to Fisher. One has either to suppose this man to have been so reckless in his wickedness as to expose his wish to traffic his official position in a letter written in black and white, or to conclude that he had no thought of so base a nature. Surely, if he had intended or expected to use the favor he had done to Caldwell to extort payment from him, he would not have been careful to say twice that he could not help taking the course he did. More-

over, he even left it to Fisher to decide whether it was expedient to mention the matter to Caldwell at all. On the whole, the worst that can justly be said of his reference to the proceedings in Congress, is well expressed by his own word, "indelicate."

About a year after the Little Rock contracts were made, there was the beginning of another transaction, never consummated, which played a large part in the subsequent relations between Fisher and Blaine. The Northern Pacific Railroad was being financed by Jay Cooke and his associates. Blaine wrote to Fisher in November, 1870, that he was able to control the assignment of one one-hundred-and-ninety-second part of the franchise of the company. He said: "The chance is a very rare one. I can't touch it, but I obey my first and best impulse in offering it to you." The price of the interest was $25,000, but the holder came under "obligation to take a large amount of the bonds at ninety, and hold them not less than three years." It appears from the subsequent correspondence that the offer was accepted by Fisher, and the sum of $25,000 was paid to Blaine, who for some reason was not able to obtain the share from the *concessionnaires*, and consequently could not deliver it to Fisher. Ultimately the money was returned to Blaine and by him restored to Fisher.

In December of the same year the Little Rock road was already in financial straits. Mr. Blaine had to explain to those to whom he had disposed of bonds that the January coupon was not to be paid, and "promised them individually to make it right in the future." He added in a letter to Fisher that he did not use the name of the company, and committed himself only. In January, 1871, at the urgent solicitation of Fisher, he raised $25,000 on his own credit, and gave his own notes, for the benefit of the company. That was the beginning of woe for him. It is unnecessary to follow the business through to the end, in detail. From that time the correspondence between Fisher and Blaine indicates that there was constant friction between them. In April, 1871, Blaine wrote to Caldwell imploring him to provide the means for the payment of his notes for the $25,000 raised for the company. Caldwell merely turned the letter over to Fisher with "I hope you can help him. I would, if it were in my power. Blaine is an important man for us to have feel all right toward us." This last sentence was used afterward by Blaine's enemies as an additional proof that he could be depended upon to sell his official influence. But aside from the fact that it was not written by him, the circumstance that he had raised for the company not far from a quarter of a million dollars

is sufficient to account for his being regarded as "an important man for us." In June Blaine again wrote to Fisher setting forth his financial troubles. His notes had not been provided for, the bonds due him under his contracts had not been delivered, and he had not received a dollar of money under the contracts which provided that kind of compensation for disposing of the railroad company's bonds. Moreover, he was responsible to his friends, by verbal agreement, for $10,000, the amount of coupons not paid on their bonds. He made a proposition in the nature of a compromise, to get himself out of his pressing difficulties. Nothing seems to have come of that, but in September Fisher was demanding the Northern Pacific securities for which the money had been paid, and reminded Blaine that Caldwell had paid back the $25,000 borrowed in January. Blaine replied the next day that he had been unable to get the Northern Pacific securities, and that it was a great mistake to say that Mr. Caldwell had paid him, for he had received only $6000 of the $25,000.

So the correspondence went on for a year longer. Each was complaining of the other. Both were desirous of a settlement, but while Fisher was demanding a settlement of the matters that would extricate himself from difficulty, Blaine insisted that his own claims should be considered

at the same time. Ultimately some sort of an agreement was reached, Fisher received the $25,000 for the Northern Pacific interest, Blaine obtained the bonds due him, and with the proceeds he partially made good the losses of his friends. For the rest of the obligation incurred toward them he drew upon his own means, and his connection with the financing of the Little Rock road came to an end. His own losses by the transaction were large.

There was one other letter in connection with the affair, which was not — as several of those already mentioned were not — among the "Mulligan letters" proper, but was made public in 1884, when Mr. Blaine was a candidate for President. Of course it was furnished by Fisher. In April, 1876, when he was preparing for his first defence against the Union Pacific charge, he wrote to Fisher a letter which was marked "confidential," asking him to write and send to himself a letter, a draft of which he enclosed, giving an account of his, Blaine's, connection with the Little Rock enterprise. It was not a full account, for it made no mention of the sale of securities to Maine investors, nor of many of the circumstances which have just been narrated. As has already been remarked, Mr. Blaine had no idea at the time that the affair would be pursued to the extent of investigating the Little Rock matter,

which was only indirectly connected with the accusation brought against him; and, as was previously remarked, he had strong reasons for wishing that the whole story should not be told. But he could write to Fisher of the draft letter which he enclosed, "The letter is strictly true, is honorable to you and to me, and will stop the mouths of slanderers at once." That is not the language of one who writes confidentially to an honorable man asking him to put his name to a lie. Mr. Blaine added a postscript, "Burn this letter," — also a phrase which his enemies frequently repeated in print and on the stump as proof that he was asking for a falsehood. In reality it is no more than an emphatic repetition of the word "confidential" at the top of the letter.[1] Undoubtedly Blaine did not wish the fact to be known that he was the author of the

[1] It may be added that it was almost a habit with Blaine to emphasize "confidential" by some such phrase. A good example may be found on a later page of this book, in the letter to General Sherman written just before the Republican convention of 1884. The present writer has a letter from Mr. Blaine upon a personal business matter in which a similar phrase is used. Mr. Andrew Devine, long a confidential stenographer for Blaine, reports that when this letter to Fisher was first published in facsimile he called Blaine's attention to the handwriting of the sentence, "Burn this letter," and insisted that it was a forgery. Blaine was not wholly convinced, and remarked that it did n't matter one way or the other, for it would have been just like him to write it.

letter he expected from Fisher. To ask Fisher to give his own account of the Little Rock business would probably have brought a letter containing some of the facts which Blaine wished withheld. His sending a draft letter and his request that the communication enclosing it should be destroyed is not inconsistent with absolute innocence of wrong-doing, and can therefore not be used even as cumulative proof that he was guilty of wrong-doing. It will be observed that Fisher neither wrote the letter, nor burned that which he received, but turned the double communication over to Blaine's enemies at a time when a misconstruction would do him the most harm.

From the beginning of the investigation by the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, ordered May 2, 1876, it was evident that it was an investigation of Blaine, and of him alone, although his name was not mentioned in the resolution. He was himself a witness and made oath to the truth of his denial of any ownership of or interest in the seventy-five bonds sold to the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Scott, Dillon, and others, directors in the company, testified either to positive knowledge that Blaine's statement was true, or to ignorance as to the ownership of the bonds. Then it became noised abroad that Warren Fisher, Jr.

and James Mulligan were coming from Boston to testify before the committee against Mr. Blaine.

Enough has been said to indicate that Fisher would be a hostile witness. Blaine had also the best of reasons for expecting that Mulligan would do him all the injury that was in his power. It has been mentioned that Mulligan was for a long time the confidential clerk of Jacob Stanwood, a brother of Mrs. Blaine. He was so competent and trustworthy that Stanwood gave him an interest in some of his ventures. But a quarrel arose between them, and they separated. Mulligan made a large claim, some $30,000, on Stanwood, which Stanwood deemed excessive. In the course of the controversy between them, Mr. Blaine, at the request of both, put in writing the points upon which they agreed, but a clause which he inserted in the paper, to the effect that the settlement was to be final, put Mulligan in a rage, and when, later, the actual settlement was made on the basis of an allowance of about half the claim, he unjustly laid his failure to obtain more at Mr. Blaine's door, and vowed vengeance. This was several years before the investigation, for Mr. Stanwood died in 1873. Mulligan became a clerk for Warren Fisher, and was of course conversant with all the business transactions between him and Blaine. The time had come to execute his threat, and he and

Fisher were in accord as to object and method of accomplishing it.

On the day when Mulligan began his testimony it became known that he had in his possession and intended to lay before the committee a large number of letters from Blaine to Fisher. They had been turned over to Mulligan for that purpose. Blaine determined, if possible, to prevent the publication of them — letters covering many and complicated business matters, written years before, often in haste and in confidence, having only the most remote bearing upon the subject under investigation, which were about to be read by a hostile witness, with his own explanation, before a committee of political enemies of the person who wrote them, bent on destroying his future. In the evening Blaine called upon Mulligan at his hotel, and when he returned home he carried the letters with him. Mulligan gave a highly fanciful account of the interview, which differed widely from Blaine's version. It would serve no good purpose to give either story in detail. Those who are disposed to hold Blaine guilty of every sort of duplicity and breach of faith will accept Mulligan's imaginative statements. But Blaine asserted that he violated no promise, that he urged Mulligan to return the letters to Fisher, a request which Fisher repeated, and that it was only

when Mulligan asserted his intention to publish the letters if any one impugned his motives that he decided to retain them. For Mulligan had permitted him to take them for examination. Of course Mulligan had no right to have and publish private letters written neither by nor to him. Either Fisher or Blaine, and no other person, was entitled to possess them.

When Mr. Blaine returned to his home, he entered the library and tossed the package on the table, remarking, with a laugh, "Well, there are the letters." The next day the committee demanded the production of the letters, but Blaine declined "at this time" to produce them. He consulted the Hon. Jeremiah S. Black and the Hon. Matt. H. Carpenter, who after examining the letters declared "that the letters and papers aforesaid have no relevancy whatever to the matter under inquiry," — a statement which, notwithstanding all that was said then, and that has been said since, was strictly true, — and they advised him to resist to the last extremity any demand for their surrender, as being "most unjust, tyrannical, as well as illegal." Acting on this advice, Mr. Blaine again and persistently refused to give up the papers.

But having vindicated his right to maintain the privacy of his own correspondence relating to transactions which not only had no reference

to the matter under investigation by the committee, but were not even a proper subject of inquiry by the House of Representatives, he foresaw that to withhold them from the public would confirm the suspicions of his enemies and give rise to doubts among his friends. He therefore determined to read them to the House. There have been few more dramatic scenes in the history of Congress than that when, on the 5th of June, 1876, Mr. Blaine rose to a personal explanation, in the course of which he read the famous Mulligan letters.

He first recited at some length the fact that under three different resolutions adopted at that session, in neither of which his name was mentioned, his conduct and his alone was under investigation. Having referred to the fact of Mulligan's going to Washington with his package of letters, to his own act in obtaining them, and to the demand for them and his refusal to surrender them, he asked, "Would any gentleman stand up here and tell me that he is willing and ready to have his private correspondence scanned over and made public for the last eight or ten years? Does it imply guilt? Does it imply wrong-doing? Does it imply any sense of weakness that a man will protect his private correspondence? No, sir; it is the first instinct to do it, and it is the last outrage upon any man to violate it." But al-

though he was ready to maintain his right and to defy the power of the House to compel him to produce the letters, "I am not afraid to show the letters. Thank God Almighty, I am not ashamed to show them. There they are [holding up a package of letters]. There is the very original package. And with some sense of humiliation, with a mortification I do not pretend to conceal, with a sense of outrage which I think any man in my position would feel, I invite the confidence of 44,000,000 of my countrymen while I read those letters from this desk."

This sensational announcement was received with hot applause on the Republican side of the House, and the Speaker and Mr. Blaine himself urged that there should be "no manifestation." Blaine then read all the letters, with comments and explanations. Mulligan's memorandum was also read by the clerk, at his request. Blaine then recapitulated briefly, with reference to the specific charge against him, that all the persons who could have any knowledge of the sale of seventy-five Little Rock bonds to the Union Pacific Railroad Company had testified under oath that he, Blaine, had nothing to do with it. There was not in any one of the Mulligan letters, and is not in any of the supplementary letters made public in 1884, any reference to a sale of bonds to or for the Union Pacific Railroad

Company.[1] Then ensued a scene which those who witnessed it followed with breathless atten-

[1] Lest it be said that there is here a suppression of a part of the truth, the following facts and citations are necessary. Mulligan's memorandum contained this reference to one of the letters: —

"No. 12. Aprl 18, 1872, admits the $64,000 sale bonds, and paid the money over in forty-eight hours to Maine parties."

Mr. Blaine commented, when this was read by the clerk, "There is not a word said about it in the letter."

The purchase of the seventy-five bonds by the Union Pacific Railroad Company was voted by the directors on December 16, 1871. On the 16th of April, 1872, Fisher wrote a highly offensive letter to Blaine in the course of which he said: —

"Of all the parties connected with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad no one has been so fortunate as yourself in obtaining money out of it. You obtained subscriptions from your friends in Maine for the building of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. Out of their subscriptions you obtained a large amount both of bonds and money, free of cost to you. I have your own figures, and know the amount. Owing to your political position, you were able to work off all your bonds at a very high price; and the fact is well known to others as well as myself. Would your friends in Maine be satisfied if they knew the facts?"

It was in answer to this letter that Blaine, doubtless with a sense of humiliation at being thus addressed, with an implied threat that his Maine friends should be made aware of the facts, wrote on the 18th: —

"You have been for some time laboring under a totally erroneous impression in regard to my results in the Fort Smith matter. The sales of bonds which you spoke of my making, and which you seem to have thought were for my own

tion. Mr. Blaine referred to the fact that there was one witness whom he could not have, to whom the Judiciary Committee was asked to send a cable despatch, — to Josiah Caldwell, — and he asked the chairman, Mr. Knott of Kentucky, if that despatch was sent.

Mr. Knott replied that "Judge Hunton and myself have both endeavored to get Mr. Caldwell's address and have not yet got it." Then ensued this colloquy, as reported in the "Congressional Record:" —

MR. BLAINE. Has the gentleman from Kentucky received a despatch from Caldwell?

MR. KNOTT. I will explain that directly.

MR. BLAINE. I want a categorical answer.

MR. KNOTT. I have received a despatch purporting to be from Mr. Caldwell.

benefit, were quite otherwise. I did not have the money in my possession forty-eight hours, but paid it over directly to the parties whom I tried by every means in my power to protect from loss. I am very sure that you have little idea of the labors, the losses, the efforts, and the sacrifices I have made within the past year to save those innocent persons who invested on my request, from personal loss. And I say to you to-night, solemnly, that I am immeasurably worse off than if I had never touched the Fort Smith matter."

There is, it will be seen, merely a general statement on Fisher's part that Blaine had sold bonds; on Blaine's part an explanation of the purpose of selling and of the disposition he had made of the proceeds.

MR. BLAINE. You did?

MR. KNOTT. How did you know I got it?

MR. BLAINE. When did you get it? I want the gentleman from Kentucky to answer when he got it.

MR. KNOTT. Answer my question first.

MR. BLAINE. I never heard of it until yesterday.

MR. KNOTT. How did you hear it?

MR. BLAINE. I heard you got a despatch last Thursday morning at eight o'clock from Josiah Caldwell completely and absolutely exonerating me from this charge, and you have suppressed it. [Protracted applause upon the floor and in the galleries.] I want the gentleman to answer. [After a pause.] Does the gentleman from Kentucky decline to answer?

Of course there was a long and heated debate, exceedingly interesting, which it is impossible to summarize. For the time being the accusers, or, if another term be preferred, the court, were on trial. Mr. Blaine in the course of his speech had made many charges of unfairness toward himself on the part of the committee, and these charges were taken up in turn, denied and explained by Judge Hunton of Virginia. Then Mr. Knott gave his own account of the incident relating to the cable despatch. He had not "sup-

pressed" it, for he had shown it to several of his friends, but to no Republican. He even said that "to tell the truth about it, after the day that I received it I gave but little, if any, thought to it until the subject was brought up here." He intimated a doubt if the despatch came from Caldwell. It was dated simply "London," and he did not know or try to find out whether it was authentic or not. Mr. Knott refused to read the despatch.

Nothing further was developed in the investigation by the Committee on the Judiciary. Indeed the inquiry was virtually dropped. There was a protracted wrangle, which consumed much of the time during the sessions of the House on the 8th and 9th of June, over a motion by Mr. Blaine to reconsider a vote ordering the printing of testimony taken in the case, in order to include the whole of it, and also the Caldwell despatch. The presiding officer — Mr. Speaker Kerr was not in the chair — ruled steadily against Blaine, and the majority upheld him and defeated Blaine's motion. There was constant disorder; Blaine was unable to obtain a hearing, and was repeatedly ordered to take his seat. The 9th of June was the last day on which he ever appeared in the House as a member. On the 11th, the Sunday before the meeting of the Cincinnati convention, he was prostrated by a

sunstroke. The Judiciary Committee postponed the hearing from time to time owing to his illness, and when Congress met again Blaine had been transferred to the Senate. The inquiry therefore came to an end.

Although this series of events, which had the most important effects upon Mr. Blaine's political career, has been told at such great length, and with a sincere effort to omit or suppress nothing essential to a correct understanding of the whole affair, the writer cannot flatter himself that he will escape the criticisms either of Blaine's most ardent partisans or of his persistent detractors. Nor, probably, will the writer's judgment upon the whole case be fully accepted in any quarter. That judgment is that on the main, in fact upon the only, charge made against his integrity and independence as a public man, Mr. Blaine was, in the words of the late Senator Hoar, "triumphantly acquitted." [1] There was not a tittle of evidence which rose above the

[1] Mr. Hoar always held this opinion. In his pamphlet published in 1884, entitled "Good Advice to Young Voters," — no publisher is named, — he says that "Mr. Schurz's adroit and skilful speech has failed to change the opinion I then [1876] formed that the charge against Mr. Blaine wholly fails." Hoar was a member of the Judiciary Committee which was charged with the investigation. He repeats this judgment in his volume of reminiscences published only a year or two before his death.

grade of second-hand hearsay that connected him in the remotest degree with the sale of Little Rock bonds to the Union Pacific Railroad Company. On the other hand there was direct and positive evidence that the bonds were not his; and it is necessary, in order to believe him guilty, to hold that several gentlemen of otherwise honorable character and standing perjured themselves to support Mr. Blaine in his own perjury.

Moreover there was nothing morally or politically wrong in his engaging in the Little Rock enterprise; and his relations to and dealings with Warren Fisher were a private matter which should never have been made public and which Blaine should never have been forced to explain. Nevertheless, one cannot wholly acquit him of blame in his transactions with his Maine friends. Whether or not all of them supposed that in offering them Little Rock securities he was disinterested, — that he gave them all that the company allowed him for the amount invested, — is not and cannot be known. It is certain that some of them did so suppose, and that when they ascertained the facts, friendly relations with him were disturbed or broken, notwithstanding his reparation, making good their losses at great expense of money, anxiety, and labor on his own part.

Aside from his natural unwillingness to have his private affairs and his confidential correspondence made public through the length and breadth of the land, the consciousness that his receipt of a large nominal commission for placing the bonds was not capable of effective defence seems to have emphasized that unwillingness, and to have caused him to put forth all his efforts to prevent publicity. No serious criticism can be made upon his action in repossessing himself of the letters which Mulligan had, without any right to them. But in his explanations prior to the time when the whole story had to be told he withheld a part of the truth. Two views may be and have been taken of his course in this respect. The harsh view is that he was guilty of a succession of falsehoods. In the pamphlets rained against him in 1884 these alleged falsehoods were catalogued and numbered; his partial and in some respects misleading statements were ranged in parallel columns with the facts afterward brought to light. The other view, charitable, reasonable, and easily admitted by any one who is as much disposed to think well as to think evil, is that since his Little Rock affairs were in no way related to the charge against him that was under investigation, and since his personal pride and his personal friendships might suffer if a full

revelation were made, he determined to tell only so much as could have any possible bearing on the pending investigation.

No matter which of these views be taken, there will be none to dispute the fact that both the immediate and the remote consequences of his connection with the Little Rock enterprise were terribly out of proportion to any benefit he might have derived from it, had it been successful. But, at the worst, nothing in the history of the affair justifies the malignity with which he was pursued to the end of his career.

VII

THE CHECK IN 1876 — SENATOR

THE presidential canvass of 1876 will always be deemed one of the most remarkable and sensational passages in the political life of the country. The extraordinary closeness of the result, the unprecedented method adopted to ascertain what the result really was, and the unexpected issue of the reference of the dispute to the Electoral Commission, have a tendency to draw attention away from the early incidents of the canvass, which are nevertheless unusually worthy of study by all who are interested in American politics.

The prospective retirement of General Grant brought into the field a large number of candidates for the Republican nomination. Each of the three states which led the others in respect of population presented a "favorite son." New York was for Senator Conkling, Pennsylvania for Governor Hartranft, and Ohio for Governor Hayes. Indiana, also, supported Senator Morton, and Connecticut brought forward Governor Jewell. These five candidates had, from purely local support, 214 votes, — more than one fourth

of the full national convention, consisting of 756 members, But most of them had also adherents from other states than their own. Mr. Morton, for example, had nearly half the delegates from the "reconstructed" states.

Beside the candidates already mentioned, there were two, also "favorite sons" to be sure, whose candidacy represented something broader and upon a distinctly higher plane than local pride and skill in gathering in delegates from states under negro and "carpet-bag" rule: Benjamin H. Bristow of Kentucky, and James G. Blaine of Maine.

The movement in favor of General Bristow was noble in purpose and was supported by a body of earnest, patriotic men. Bristow's course as Secretary of the Treasury gave them good reason to believe not only that he would tolerate no corruption or wrong-doing on the part of public officers, but also that he would find out offences before they became scandals, and secure the punishment of the offenders. Too little detection, or initiative of any sort in the prosecution of corrupt officials and their hangers-on, could be placed to the credit of General Grant's administration. No one doubted either the President's own integrity or his abhorrence of the evils that were brought to light. But those evils became known accidentally, or through

the agency of private persons; and General Grant would not dismiss an officer "under fire." The Bristow candidacy was to a certain extent a remnant of the "Liberal Republican" movement of 1872. It was supported eagerly by those Republicans who were already strongly opposed to Blaine as offering the best chance of defeating him. By no means all of those who advocated the nomination of General Bristow were of this class, but the movement was essentially anti-Blaine. The selection either of Morton or of Conkling would have been exceedingly distasteful to them, but they did not greatly fear that either could be successful.

Blaine was the leading candidate. It will doubtless be difficult if not impossible for those who know what an adroit and resourceful political manager he was, whether one be a partisan or an opponent of the man, to believe that the canvass in his favor was in no sense or degree guided or promoted by him. Yet it is the simple truth. Mr. Blaine declared to the present writer in December, 1875, that he "had not the presidential bee in his bonnet," and his course during the ensuing six months proves that the statement was sincere and truthful. An illustration of his — we cannot, perhaps, say — indifference, but at least his unwillingness to exert himself to secure the nomination, is given on the authority of Mr.

Sherman, his confidential secretary. During that period hundreds of letters were received by Blaine from persons in every part of the country, pledging support, offering service, and asking for advice as to the best means of accomplishing the nomination. Many, perhaps most, of these letters were from men who were leaders of the party in the state, county, or city from which they were written. Mr. Blaine did not answer one of the letters. They accumulated upon his desk in great piles. Mr. Sherman expostulated with Mr. Blaine on the subject and urged that courtesy to the writers as well as good policy suggested that he should devote time to the disposal of this important correspondence. The appeal was unsuccessful; but at last Sherman obtained permission to employ assistance and answer the letters himself. Accordingly he classified them according to the reply to be made, prepared blank forms, and he and his assistants cleared the desk. The most important letters only were reserved for Blaine's personal signature.

No doubt many of the supporters who went to Washington to see him and obtain verbal advice were successful in their mission. But Mr. Blaine was inaccessible to all but a very few callers, he invited no political managers to visit him, he had not even one lieutenant in all the

country, chosen by himself and reporting to him, to secure convention delegates in one or more states. Indeed, it was not until the Saturday before the meeting of the national convention, so Sherman reports, that upon being assured by despatches from his friends, Messrs. Hale and Frye of Maine, that his nomination seemed sure, he became noticeably interested in the contest.[1]

It might be urged that during the two or three months prior to the Cincinnati convention Mr. Blaine was too fully occupied in repelling the assaults made upon his character to leave much time for personal attention to his canvass. On the other hand it is equally reasonable to argue that such attacks would naturally cause him to put forth every energy he possessed to counteract their effect by a watchful effort to control the party primaries and the district and state conventions. The fact that he had taken no part in the canvass before he was forced to defend himself is conclusive. His abstention was not due to preoccupation with the Union Pacific — Little Rock affair, but was a policy which he would have followed in any event.

[1] His light and half incredulous way of looking at his own prospects is illustrated by an incident of the time. One day he waved a telegram just received, laughingly, with the remark, "Oregon has elected delegates for me, and as Maine also is for me, it only remains for my friends to fill up the little gap between them."

Yet he was under great mental strain. His reputation was of far more importance to him than the presidency. He was in the hands of his enemies. The Democratic majority in the House of Representatives treated his denials and explanations as unsatisfactory, misleading, or false; and on his final appearance in that body the Speaker *pro tempore*, Mr. Cox of New York, supported by all the members on the Democratic side, had taken a course which he deemed a denial of justice, beside being disrespectful and discourteous. True, practically all of Mr. Blaine's party friends on the floor stood by him; and most of the leading Republican newspapers throughout the country maintained that he had fully exonerated himself. But there were exceptions, and they were influential exceptions. The tone of the Chicago *Tribune*, and of both the great Republican dailies of Cincinnati, where the convention was to be held, was distinctly hostile. Their reception of Mr. Blaine's answer to the charges made against him was as cool and suspicious as was that of the Democratic press. It even suggested a doubt whether these important journals would support the nomination, should it be made, and it certainly caused many delegates who did not themselves question Mr. Blaine's integrity to withhold their votes from him, lest the absolute union of the party,

which all knew to be essential, should be put in peril.[1]

On Sunday morning, June 11, three days before the meeting of the Cincinnati convention, Mr. Blaine and his family made ready to go to church, as was their custom. As it was an oppressively warm day Mrs. Blaine suggested that they should go in a carriage, but Mr. Blaine declared that he felt unusually well that morning and preferred to walk. The party had just reached the steps of the church when Mr. Blaine was suddenly prostrated, and sank into the arms of his wife. He murmured something about a pain in his head, and then became unconscious. Help was summoned quickly, and he was taken to his home, which was soon surrounded by friends anxious for him, and able to express their sympathy only by their mute presence. Many men prominent in public life called to obtain intelligence. Physicians thronged to the house to offer their services. It was late in the afternoon before he showed the least sign of consciousness, but from that time his recovery

[1] It is an interesting fact that two of the editors who were largely responsible for Mr. Blaine's defeat at Cincinnati, Mr. Joseph Medill and Mr. Murat Halstead, afterward became most ardent partisans; and it is perhaps the most conspicuous example of Mr. Blaine's lifelong willingness to be friends with those who had been his enemies, that terms of close intimacy and friendship were established with them.

was rapid. He was able to take a drive on Tuesday, and although he had recovered little of his strength, he was able to follow with interest the proceedings of the convention as they were telegraphed by his friends direct from the convention hall to his house. The attack seems not to have been technically a sunstroke, but was undoubtedly the combined effect of the great mental strain and the intense heat. It was some time before he was again physically well, but mentally his restoration was complete on the day after his seizure.

It was a new argument against his nomination. Many a man would hesitate to choose as a candidate for the presidency one who had been prostrated by an attack which might have permanent consequences, affecting his power to discharge intelligently the duties of the office. As much as possible was made of this point, and incredulity as to the recovery of Mr. Blaine was encouraged. No doubt it was one of several causes of his defeat.

Yet not only was Mr. Blaine the leading candidate in six of the seven votes necessary to effect a nomination, but he had at the beginning more supporters than any other two candidates, and on the sixth vote he had as many delegates in his favor, lacking one, as the next three candidates. On the final vote Governor Hayes had

only thirty-three more than Mr. Blaine, and but five more than were necessary for a choice. Moreover Mr. Blaine's support was by far the most general, geographically considered, for on the first vote he received support from thirty-five states and territories of the forty-seven represented, and on the second vote from thirty-nine. This fact is the more remarkable when it is considered that New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Connecticut were "solid" for their own candidates, and that Mr. Blaine had extremely weak support from all the New England states except Maine.

When the sixth vote was in progress, Mr. Blaine, seated near the telegraph instrument in his own house, expressed the opinion that Governor Hayes would be nominated. His own vote was increasing; he received twelve more than on any previous trial, and Mr. Hayes's increase was only nine. But he called attention to the fact that Hayes was the only one of all the candidates who had increased his vote at each successive trial. When the returns began to come from the states, called in alphabetical order, on the seventh and final vote, his opinion was confirmed. Upon the announcement that New York transferred its support from Mr. Conkling to Mr. Hayes, he remarked, "That settles it," and began to write a despatch con-

gratulating the successful candidate upon his nomination. "It will be alike my highest pleasure," he wrote, "as well as my first political duty to do the utmost in my power to promote your election. The earliest moments of my returning and confirmed health will be devoted to securing you as large a vote in Maine as she would have given for myself." The pledge was kept; and although the undertaking could not be fully carried out, Maine did give a comfortable majority of nearly seventeen thousand to the Republican ticket. Nor did Mr. Blaine confine his efforts in behalf of Hayes and Wheeler to his own state. He was at the service of the national committee, and made a long and arduous campaign in many states, east and west. Wherever he went he was greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds, and received most gratifying manifestations of the admiration and devotion of his Republican friends.

In his earnest and zealous campaigning in behalf of Governor Hayes, Mr. Blaine exhibited one of the finest traits of his character as a public man, — a negative trait, to be sure, — the complete absence of anything like sulkiness in defeat, or spitefulness toward those who had compassed his defeat. His conduct under disappointment is no doubt partly to be explained by a certain personal self-respect which forbade him to ex-

hibit to the world the wounds he had received. On one occasion when he had received a serious rebuff he said to his secretary, who expressed surprise at his apparent indifference, "Why should I show people my sore toes?"

But there is the best authority for saying that Mr. Blaine was really not seriously disappointed at being rejected by the Cincinnati convention, and not nearly so sorry over the result as were most of his friends. If his own assertions on this point are dismissed as insincere, his conduct and bearing, in public and in private, among those so near him constantly that they could not be deceived, affirm it in the most positive manner. It is scarcely too much to say that he enjoyed his campaigning at home and in other states during the autumn of 1876 quite as much as if it had been undertaken to promote his own election.

Almost immediately after the close of the Cincinnati convention General Bristow retired from the cabinet. Senator Lot M. Morrill, of Maine, was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, and entered upon the duties of that office on the 6th of July. Governor Connor appointed Mr. Blaine to fill the vacancy in the Senate, and his credentials were presented on the 12th. But his health did not permit him then to take his seat in the Senate, and he went to Maine for his convalescence. The appointment met the almost uni-

versal approval of the people of Maine. His persistent opponents, in the hope of defeating the ratification of Governor Connor's selection by the legislature, flooded the members of that body with the literature of the Little Rock affair. Yet Mr. Blaine was so popular at home, and enjoyed to such a degree the confidence of those who knew him, that when the election took place he received the votes, not only of all the Republican members of the legislature, but of all the Democrats also. He was chosen unanimously, both to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Morrill, and for the full term of six years from the 4th of March, 1877.

He took his seat in the Senate, under the governor's appointment, at the beginning of the next session, December, 1876. He engaged but little in the debates at that session, and only once went much beyond the point of incidental remarks. Although intensely interested in the controversy over the count of the electoral votes and the determination of the result, he confined himself for the most part to a private expression of his views. During the protracted session of the Senate at the close of which that body passed the Electoral Commission bill, he spoke for about five minutes in earnest opposition to the measure. His point was that such a commission as was proposed was extra-constitutional. He did not

believe that Congress had the power which it was proposed to confer on fifteen men, and still less the power to transfer it to the commission.

Notwithstanding all that was said at that critical juncture, probably no person whose opinion carries weight would now dissent from Mr. Blaine's contention on the constitutional question. Yet in all probability, were a similar crisis to arise, there would be little opposition to that or some equally unauthorized device for solving an otherwise insoluble problem. The alternative was, and again would be, anarchy. Congress had, first in 1864, and afterward at the two intervening elections, counted the electoral votes under the operation of a joint rule which involved the exclusion of any electoral votes to which either House objected. The object was not to pass upon the validity of contesting electoral colleges in any state, but to prevent the counting of votes from any state that had passed an ordinance of secession and had not been restored to all its rights under the Constitution. Under this rule, should the House reject the vote of any one of the states in dispute, — Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida, — Mr. Tilden would be elected. The Republicans asserted, and in this they were certainly correct, that a joint rule expires with the Congress which adopts it, and is of no force unless renewed. They also maintained that, in the ab-

sence of any rule governing the count of electoral votes, it is the duty of the presiding officer of the Senate to count those votes and to declare the result.

In such a situation, with a Republican Senate and a Democratic House of Representatives, it is easy to see, not merely that there was danger of a most regrettable conflict, but that, unless some plan were agreed to by both parties and both Houses, each House and each party would declare its own candidate elected. Inasmuch as no one then, or since that time, has suggested a less objectionable measure than the Electoral Commission, and inasmuch as without some measure of the sort the country would have been in danger of civil war, we may concede that Mr. Blaine's point was well taken, and yet hold that it was a wise and patriotic act to pass the bill to which he objected. Moreover, it may be urged with force that, if it is unconstitutional to provide that an electoral vote shall not be rejected without the concurrence of both Houses of Congress — it must surely also be unconstitutional to allow one of the two Houses to secure the rejection of a vote.

The decisions of the Electoral Commission, which could not be reversed, because the Senate would not reverse them, resulted in the declaration that Mr. Hayes was elected. He was installed in the office of President, and immediately

changed the policy maintained by General Grant. The few state governments under Republican control, which had been upheld by the general government against the attempts of the white people to overthrow them, were abandoned to their fate. Although Mr. Blaine was never in favor of "bayonet rule," the desertion by the President of the cause of the very governments whose validity was essential to his own claim to the office he occupied, seemed to Mr. Blaine a surrender of the only tenable argument the President possessed and a betrayal of his friends. The fact that in making up his cabinet Mr. Hayes not only did not invite Mr. Blaine to become a member of it, but, in offering a place to one of Mr. Blaine's leading supporters, disregarded his wishes in the selection, and that he made choice for another department of a persistent and lifelong enemy of the senator, gave opportunity to the ever-vigilant critics to ascribe his objection to the new Southern policy to personal disappointment.[1] But Mr. Blaine, even if he had been

[1] He was asked soon after the beginning of Mr. Hayes's administration how he liked the new cabinet. He replied by telling a story of a party of young fellows who went on a camping tour. They chose one of their number as cook, and he consented to accept the position on condition that the first person who complained of the food should take his place. The first man who set his teeth into a biscuit the next morning exclaimed, "Whew! how salt this bread is!" And then he added quickly, "but I like biscuit a little salty."

asked to become one of President Hayes's advisers, would never have consented to a course which would have been inconsistent with all that he had said in the House and on the stump, since the political overturn of 1874 had shown what the Southern white men intended to do, and what they had already nearly accomplished.

Indeed, Mr. Blaine had indicated his own opinion, and had taken a course different from that which the President was about to adopt, before the new policy was even foreshadowed. The Senate met in special session on the day of the inauguration. It was closely divided politically, and there were several persons claiming seats from Southern states to whose admission there were objections. Most of them were Democrats, but the Democrats themselves objected to the admission of Governor Kellogg, of Louisiana, whose claim rested upon the authority of the famous "returning board" of that state. It is a tradition of the Senate that a new member shall keep himself modestly in the background. The older senators are disposed to resent as an act of presumption even a slight and occasional participation in the debates by a novice. No doubt Mr. Blaine was fully aware of this custom of the Senate, yet on the second day of the session he offered a resolution that Mr. Kellogg be sworn in as a senator. One or two only of the Republi-

cans came to his support, and he was forced to sustain his side of the question almost alone. The Democrats opposed him, and proposed that the case be postponed until the committees should be appointed and the matter examined. Queerly enough they were allowed to have their way. Six of the Republicans voted with them, — two or three new senators among them, who explained their votes by saying frankly that they did not understand the Louisiana question. Mr. Conkling was one of the six, and he did not explain his vote. He certainly needed no additional light on the controversy. The proposition to admit Mr. Kellogg was defeated, 29 to 35, and it was not until the regular session that he was allowed to take his seat.

Mr. Blaine showed no hesitation in taking ground in opposition to the abandonment of the enfranchised, and now to be disfranchised, freedmen. When a despatch was received from Governor Chamberlain, of South Carolina, giving information that he was advised — apparently by the chief member of the Cabinet, Mr. Evarts, — that he ought to yield, for the good of the country, Mr. Blaine read the despatch to the Senate, and exclaimed: —

"Is there a senator on this floor who desires to stand sponsor for that despatch, or for the policy that it covers? Is there a senator here who

proposes to abandon the remnant that is left of the Republican party between the Potomac and the Rio Grande, and that it shall go down for the public good? . . . I propose for myself, so long as I shall be entrusted with a seat on this floor, that, whoever else shall halt or grow weak in maintaining it, so long as I have the strength I will stand for southern Union men of both colors; and when I cease to do that before any presence, North or South, in official bodies or before public assemblies, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth and my right hand forget its cunning."

It is too early, even yet, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century since those words were spoken, to pronounce Mr. Hayes's policy right and Mr. Blaine's judgment wrong. In view of questions regarding suffrage in the Southern States which are still undecided, or have been decided arbitrarily, it may be that, even if Republican reconstruction must be regarded as unduly harsh in its operation, the Republican surrender was premature.

During the session of 1877–78 Mr. Blaine made a speech in the Senate which was one of the few utterances from his lips that may justly be criticized as showing a lack of tact and even of good taste. Maine sent to the national statuary gallery a statue of William King, the first governor of the State. The exercises of presentation took

place in the Senate on January 22, 1878. Senator Hannibal Hamlin was the first speaker, and was followed by Mr. Blaine, who took occasion to contrast the active loyalty of the people of the District of Maine with the official and private aloofness of old Massachusetts, during the war of 1812, and to represent in rather a strong light the difficulties and opposition that Maine encountered from the government and the leading men of the Commonwealth in obtaining consent to the separation, which took place in 1820. He had given notice to the senators from Massachusetts that he was about to refer to these matters, and after he had concluded, Mr. Dawes and Mr. Hoar, although not calling in question any of the specific facts alleged by Mr. Blaine, resented his attack upon the state as uncalled for, and as giving an incorrect idea both of the general attitude of Massachusetts toward the second war with Great Britain, and of its course in the matter of the erection of the new State of Maine. The discussion became quite warm and somewhat acrimonious. No one can read it without a feeling that whatever Mr. Blaine's motive was in introducing the subject, his speech resulted in an unpleasant discordance which was quite out of place on such an occasion. It gave an opportunity to his Republican opponents, who were rather numerous in Massachusetts, to insinuate that his

purpose was to pay off an old score — the hostility to him on the part of some of the delegates from that state to the convention of 1876. Although there was undoubtedly nothing in this charge, yet it is undeniable that his assault on Massachusetts intensified whatever feeling against him already existed, and that his speech on William King was not forgotten in 1884.

The great event of that session was the passage of the act restoring the silver dollar to the coinage, against which the veto of President Hayes was unavailing. Mr. Blaine indicated his position on the question briefly in the debate on the resolution of Senator Stanley Matthews, of Ohio, which declared that it would not be a violation of the public faith to pay the principal and interest of the public debt in silver dollars. He argued the matter more at length when the bill admitting silver to free coinage on the same terms as gold came from the House of Representatives, and was before the Senate in the form of a substitute providing for coinage of silver dollars on government account.

Mr. Blaine occupied ground between the two extremes. Like a great many advocates of the most scrupulous good faith toward public creditors, he was a firm believer in bimetallism — a word not then invented. Moreover, he held that it was unconstitutional to demonetize gold or silver, either or both, and quoted a remark by Daniel

Webster to sustain his point on the constitutional question. But he was inflexible in holding that the bullion value of the silver dollar must be equal to that of the gold dollar, and that a remonetization of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, — 412½ grains of standard silver to the dollar, — when that amount of silver was worth only ninety-two cents in the market, would be a fraud upon all creditors. He expected that a remonetization of silver by the United States would be followed by similar action on the part of Germany and the countries of the Latin Union. His own proposition was to increase the weight of the silver dollar to 425 grains, believing that the act of remonetization, which would lead to a largely increased use of silver, would also cause a sufficient rise in the value of the metal to make the new dollar intrinsically worth the gold dollar. At the current price of silver bullion his proposed dollar would be worth a little less than ninety-five cents.

Every student of the literature of the silver controversy, which lasted almost exactly twenty years, and which was at its beginning in the winter of 1877–78, is aware of the almost infinite variety of opinions advanced. The gold standard had to make its way against many logical and theoretical obstacles. Among those who were earnestly in favor of "good money" as distinguished from "cheap money," who placed abso-

lute justice to creditors before favor to debtors, who were opposed to inflation for the purpose of bringing about good times, who did not believe that the stamp of the government mint could create value or increase value, — among this class of men who always resisted the devices for lowering the standard of value, from the earliest greenback to the latest silver scheme, were a great many strong and able thinkers who were more or less attracted by the idea of bimetallism and alarmed by the fancied dangers of monometallism. They doubted, as did Mr. Blaine, the constitutional power of Congress to establish the standard in one metal; or they feared, as he did, that a general adoption of the gold standard would cause a scarcity of money and a great rise of prices; or they believed that a general return to the dual standard by the countries which had abandoned it would restore silver to its former price, and would not merely make the American silver dollar coined at the ratio with gold of sixteen to one actually worth the gold dollar, but would make it worth so much more that the United States would be forced, in order to retain its silver, to adopt the Latin Union ratio of fifteen to one.

It is not necessary to cite all the reasons which led many advocates of "honest money," as they called themselves, to concede one point after an-

other to those who urged the immediate and unconditional free coinage of the silver dollar. Those who erred in this way erred in good company. Bimetallism had great and able champions, both in this country and abroad, among men who would never have advocated it if they had believed that in its operation it would impair the value of property or do injustice to creditors. Mr. Blaine was on this point as firm as a rock. He was entitled to his belief on the subject of the unconstitutionality of monometallism, and to his faith that a heavier dollar than that of "the fathers" would become worth a gold dollar and retain that value. But every proposition which savored of injury to creditors and impairment of the value of contracts he opposed steadily and consistently. He resisted, for example, the argument that because, when some of the bonds were issued, silver and gold were by law equally a standard of value, therefore it was equitable for the government to discharge those obligations in silver. He said that the phrase "nominated in the bond" is "not an honored phrase in this world's history."

"Let the public creditor come face to face with you," he said in a debate in the Senate, "and he can say to you 'Silver and gold were equally meant in the bond;' I so hold; but he can say to you that you, representing the Congress of the

United States, have destroyed the value of silver in the markets of the world. It was your demonetization that discredited it. It was your act."

Mr. Howe, of Wisconsin, interrupted: "We put it back." Mr. Blaine replied: "Ah, but you cannot put back the same thing. You have done what you cannot undo. The public creditor can come face to face with you and say that when you, with your power, by your act, discredited silver, it was more valuable than what you agreed to give him, but that by your sovereign power, over which he had no control whatever, you destroyed the money value of that article; and after you had destroyed it, after you had taken out its paying and its purchasing power, you turn around and say, 'We will restore it because it is below what it was, and we will force it upon you because it is nominated in the bond.'"

The above is a good illustration of his attitude; and all his votes on the numerous amendments offered to the silver bill, save only those relating to the amount of silver the dollar was to contain, were in accordance therewith. He voted against the bill on its final passage, and again, when it was returned by the house with the veto of the President, he was recorded in the negative.

From the time of the silver debate onward Mr. Blaine took a prominent part in the debates in the Senate. Not many of the older members of that

body were on their feet so often as he, to express opinions, to ask questions of the senator occupying the floor, or to engage in the thrust and parry of debate. Some of the questions of the day interested him greatly, and he entered earnestly into them. The now-forgotten controversy as to the appointment of the third arbitrator on the subject of the fisheries, under the Treaty of Washington, was raised by him. The points he made were never refuted; they were hardly questioned. Great Britain was to appoint one arbitrator, the United States one, and the two governments were to agree on a third; upon their failure to do so within a certain time, the third was to be designated by the Emperor of Austria-Hungary. There were objections to the appointment of a Belgian, which were first suggested and officially admitted by Lord Ripon, based on the close relations between Great Britain and Belgium. Yet when the State Department submitted a list of acceptable persons, ministers from many European and American countries at Washington, they were all rejected on the ground that Canada objected to the choice of any minister accredited to this country, and the British minister proposed instead the name of the Belgian minister at Washington. The British government adhered to this grossly, almost absurdly, inconsistent nomination, would listen to no other

name, and dragged out the consideration of the question until the time for an agreement had expired. The Emperor of Austria-Hungary thereupon appointed the one gentleman to whom the United States had objected. The arbitration resulted in a decision, assented to by the British and Belgian members, that the United States should pay the sum of five and a half million dollars for the privileges granted under the Treaty of Washington.

It was held then, and has always been held by every one who enjoyed those privileges, and practically by every American, that the advantages secured to Canada — the chief of which was the free admission of all fresh fish into the great market of this country — were far more valuable than the rights granted to Americans, to buy bait, to fish within the three-mile limit, and to land and cure their fish. Mr. Blaine presented the case very strongly, showed how completely Great Britain had overreached this country by practically selecting a majority of the commission, and urged that, although it would be on every account good policy to pay the amount awarded, that should not be done without letting it be known that in the opinion of Congress the arbitration had not been a fair one. The money was paid, and Great Britain took no notice of the objection.

This was Mr. Blaine's first essay in international affairs. But in the same session — that of 1877–78 — at which he took the lead in this matter, he began his service in the direction of enlarging the trade of the country with Spanish-America, in which region afterward, as Secretary of State, he developed a national policy that should always be associated with his name. He urged with eloquence and great ability the establishment of subsidized lines of steamships to South America, particularly to Brazil, and emphasized the folly of allowing Great Britain and Germany to seize and hold the trade of that continent, without adopting measures to secure commerce that might be had. The last speech he made in the Senate, on January 27, 1881, a few weeks before entering President Garfield's cabinet, was on a subject closely allied to this. Senator Beck, of Kentucky, introduced a resolution declaring that all laws which prevented Americans from purchasing and registering under the flag of the United States ships built abroad, ought to be repealed. He spoke at great length in favor of the policy of "free ships."

Mr. Blaine replied at once, "without preparation, and with no data except such as I recall from memory." It was, nevertheless, an able speech, in which the neglect of the shipping interest by Congress was dwelt upon with almost as much

earnestness as was the discouragement of ship-building in this country that would be the consequence of Mr. Beck's policy. He called attention in a striking passage to the fact that in the previous twenty years Congress had given two hundred million acres of land and seventy million dollars in cash in aid of internal transportation by rail, but had devoted hardly a single dollar to building up the foreign commerce of the country. He cited the case of Brazil, which offered an American company a subsidy of one hundred thousand dollars a year to maintain a steamship line between New York and Rio de Janeiro, on condition that the United States would grant an equal sum. The offer was not accepted by Congress, the line was about to be discontinued, and Americans would be reduced to the humiliation of sending their letters to South America by way of Liverpool. For a British company would bring the coffee and india rubber of Brazil to New York, would carry American produce to England, and would complete the triangular voyage by transporting British manufactures to Brazil.

He urged strongly the point that Mr. Beck expressly conceded that the policy of free ships involved the dependence of this country on Great Britain for ships for an indefinite period, and contrasted the policy proposed with the actual policy of Great Britain itself, which was paying

millions of dollars annually to maintain its own steamship lines, in the form of payment for the carriage of the mails. He also referred to the absolute dependence of a country which has a navy upon a mercantile marine. The navy had been starved, and would-be merchants were deterred from engaging in ocean commerce by the indifference of Congress. Mr. Beck's policy would take away the last hope of creating at home a business of shipbuilding.

A careful reading of Mr. Blaine's speeches — this and others — on topics connected with business, particularly with the foreign trade, is necessary to show how far he was in advance of his time, how fully he anticipated conditions and arguments, and how definitely he set forth a policy which has since been adopted and extended by the party to which he was all his life attached.

The government was practically at war with itself during the administration of Mr. Hayes. The House of Representatives was controlled by the Democrats during his whole term; and from 1879 to 1881 both branches of Congress were in their hands. While the overthrow of Republicanism and the suppression of the negro vote were nearing accomplishment in the Southern States, the Democratic party in Congress was bending all its energy to expunge the legislation by means

of which a stand had been made against those political schemes. The history of the long contest is extremely interesting, but is so familiar in its general outlines that it need not be rehearsed. Congress held the purse strings. For the purpose had in view, either House held the purse strings. The President might veto appropriation bills bearing "riders" that repealed laws deemed by the South obnoxious, but so long as the House of Representatives refused to vote supplies save on condition that the political legislation be accepted with the grant of money for civil and military purposes, that body dominated the situation. It was inevitable that in the end the executive department should yield to the legislative, or the government would die of starvation.

Mr. Blaine did not intervene often in the debates on the issues raised in this conflict, but his words when he did take part were weighty and — to the members of his own party at least — convincing. His most important speeches on the Southern question were delivered, the one on December 11, 1878, at the third and concluding session of the Forty-fifth Congress, the other on April 4, 1879, at the first session of the Forty-sixth Congress, called by President Hayes in consequence of the failure of appropriation bills.

On the first of these occasions Mr. Blaine spoke on a resolution introduced by himself, providing

for an investigation of the denial and abridgment of the right of suffrage "in any of the States of the Union," but really of the means by which the negro vote of the South had been suppressed. He brought out in a most striking way the fact that the Southern white men enjoyed, man for man, vastly more political power than an equal number of men at the North. For example, South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana had as many representatives in Congress as Iowa and Wisconsin; but in those Southern states the votes of colored men were not allowed to be cast, or if cast not allowed to be counted, and thus sixty thousand men in those states exercised as great power as one hundred and thirty-two thousand men in Wisconsin and Iowa. The speech was by no means confined to this point, but the numerical exposition of the inequity of the condition which the Southern people had brought about was the most prominent feature of it. Mr. Blaine's resolution, modified with his consent, was adopted by the Senate, and the investigation and report by the Teller committee were the result, — an argumentative result only, for the Republican party has never ventured unitedly to take up the problem of the over-representation of the South.

The use of statistics to carry conviction to the minds of his hearers was one of Mr. Blaine's favorite methods in argument. On the occasion of

the second speech mentioned above he made such use with great effect. The Southern Democrats and their Northern allies were making a persistent effort to repeal the clause in an act of Congress passed in 1865, which by implication allowed the presence of a military force to preserve the peace at the polls. They made much of the intimidation practised by the army and urged the repeal in the name of liberty. Mr. Blaine, in the course of his speech, challenged any senator to specify the time and place of such intimidation, or of the presence of soldiers at a voting-place while an election was taking place. Only one such case since the close of the Civil War could be, or at all events was, cited. Mr. Blaine turned the whole affair into ridicule by showing that in the entire South there were only eleven hundred and fifty-five soldiers. He said there were twelve hundred and three counties in those states, and therefore there was less than one soldier to a county "to intimidate, overrun, oppress, and destroy the liberties of fifteen million people, and rob them of freedom at the polls." Also, he remarked, there was one soldier for every seven hundred square miles. He characterized the agitation and pretended alarm over military intimidation as "a prodigious and absolute farce, a miserably manufactured false issue, a pretence without the least foundation in the world."

The Southern question was so much on his mind, and his sense of the injustice that was in danger of becoming permanent, because it was neither checked nor rebuked, was so strong, that in 1880 he contributed the remarkable paper to the "North American Review," March issue, on the questions: "Ought the negro to be disfranchised? Ought he to have been enfranchised?" to which brief reference has already been made.[1]

If Mr. Blaine's views are obsolete at the present day, that is no more than can be said of the views of all the other contributors to the symposium. Mr. Blaine held, not only that the negro ought not to be disfranchised, but that he could not be legally deprived of the right of suffrage. One vote more than one third in either branch of Congress would prevent the annulment of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and "if these securities and safeguards should give way, then the disfranchisement could not be effected so long as a majority in one branch in the legislatures of one state more than one fourth of all the states should refuse to assent to it, and refuse to assent to a convention to which it might be referred. No human right on this continent is more completely guaranteed than the right against disfranchisement on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, as em-

[1] P. 77.

bodied in the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

He was equally emphatic in answering the second question. "If the question were again submitted to the judgment of Congress I would vote for suffrage in the light of experience with more confidence than I voted for it in the light of an experiment."

On both these points public opinion at the North has undergone a change. Where it has not gone to the extent of regarding the enfranchisement of the negro as a political blunder, and of explicit approval of the steps taken in most of the Southern states to nullify the two amendments, it has become indifferent and tolerant. Mr. Blaine's argument was powerful and logically unanswerable, but he counted too little upon the determination of the Southern white men to resume the absolute political power which they exercised before the Civil War, too much upon the restraining power of the letter of the Constitution, unsupported by legislative and executive measures to enforce it, and too much upon a continuing public sentiment in the old "free States" in favor of upholding the rights of those whom the issue of the war had freed from bondage. But it is a singular fact that Messrs. Lamar, Stephens, Hampton, and Hendricks were almost as emphatic in declaring against disfranchisement as

was Mr. Blaine himself. If the first three of these eminent Democrats represented the opinion of the white men in their respective states of Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina, it follows that public sentiment in the South as well as at the North has undergone a complete change during the last quarter-century.

Mr. Blaine became much interested in the movement against Chinese immigration. In February, 1879, he delivered two speeches on the subject in the Senate, and wrote a long letter to the New York "Tribune" in answer to objections raised to his position. At that time the agitation against the coming of the Chinese, which had originated on the "sand lots" of San Francisco, was greatly deprecated by a large number of men who regarded it as contrary to the spirit of American institutions and as catering to a base prejudice. The position taken by Mr. Blaine seemed to them a yielding to the demands of a class of men who put self interest and race hatred above the generous hospitality which the country had always extended to all the peoples of the world. On this question also opinion has changed greatly and has come around to Mr. Blaine's position. His arguments, prepared in 1879, would be accepted to-day by a vast majority of those who then criticized and rejected them.

After Garfield's tender of the Secretaryship of State had been accepted by Mr. Blaine, he ceased to be regular in his attendance at the sessions of the Senate, and early in February, 1881, his name was recorded for the last time among those voting. His service in the Senate, therefore, lasted but little more than four years. That is not long enough to determine how well qualified a man is to achieve a position of the highest influence in that body. Some of Mr. Blaine's natural and acquired faculties were disadvantageous to him at the beginning of his senatorial career, and had not wholly ceased to be so when he retired from the chamber. The Senate is a continuous body, and always contains a large number of members who have seen many years of service. It is natural for them, not only to assume as of right leadership in all the functions of the Senate, but also to discourage anything which seems like forwardness on the part of new members. Mr. Blaine was not one who could be repressed by unwritten laws prescribing the conduct of juniors. If any one should have been permitted to take full part in the activities of the Senate immediately upon his admission to a seat, he was surely such a man. His long experience in Congress had given him a familiarity with all the public questions of the time as profound as that enjoyed by any senator. His standing as a political leader in

the country at large entitled his opinions to great weight. No one in either branch of Congress was more ready than he in debate.

Nevertheless the rule tacitly laid down and rigidly enforced by the seniors made no exception in his case. So far as the proverbial senatorial courtesy permitted, the veterans of the Senate made evident their feeling that Mr. Blaine's active intervention in debate was an unwarranted intrusion. Specific examples might be, but of course will not be, given by the score, illustrating the cool, supercilious tone in which his remarks in debate were received and his pungent questions answered. Those who care to examine one illustration will find it in the debate on the distribution of the Alabama Claims money in the Senate, on April 19, 1880.[1] Not that Mr. Blaine greatly minded the chilly courtesy or the sometimes almost undisguised hostility of his interlocutors, or that he repaid them in their own coin. He was accustomed to receive as well as to give blows; he was too conscious of his own powers to be vanquished on the floor by anything except argument; he was too skilful a debater to be forced to lose his temper; he had too much personal pride to show that he felt it if the antagonist in his prodding touched the quick.

[1] *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2d Sess., part 2, p. 2515, *et seq.*

In a few years more he would have ceased to be guilty of the atrocious crime of being a young man in the Senate. But he would never have outgrown the habit of frequent interruption of the speeches of other senators. The custom of the Senate in debate is different from that of the House of Representatives, and although interruptions are tolerated, there is a limit beyond which they are resented. Mr. Blaine was noted for his frequent and persistent interjection of little speeches into the speeches of his colleagues, corrections of their statements made in a dogmatic tone, and questions intended by their very form to expose what seemed to him the fallacies the senator on the floor was uttering. It is little to the purpose that his interruptions almost always served to throw light on the question under discussion. It was an importation into the Senate debates of a method widely different from that to which the body was accustomed, and one which the senators did not like.

Aside from this peculiarity, which was, indeed, a part of his nature, and which had been intensified by his long training in the more stirring and turbulent atmosphere of the other branch of Congress, Mr. Blaine had all the qualifications of an ideal senator — wide knowledge, cool judgment, patience in investigation, and the ability to express himself vigorously and felicit-

ously in convincing argument, on the spur of the moment as well as after careful preparation. That he had not, in the four years of his service in the Senate, acquired over his fellow members anything like the influence he had possessed in the House, nor even an approach to the reputation he enjoyed among the people of the country, is due to the rigid law of etiquette that prevails in the Senate, under which a member must pass through a novitiate before he is allowed to speak with authority, and to be heard with respect.

VIII

IN GARFIELD'S CABINET

During practically the whole period of Mr. Blaine's service in Congress the conduct of the Republican canvass in Maine at every election was entrusted to him. In all that time — almost twenty years — no contests were more difficult, none called more imperatively for the exercise of cool judgment and for sturdy adherence to political principle, than the last three in which he was engaged.

The "greenback idea" did not at the outset make much progress in Maine. At all events it did not manifest itself in a breaking of party ties so early as it did elsewhere. In 1876, when the National, or Greenback, party was fully organized, there were but a few hundred votes in Maine for Weaver, the party candidate for president. But in 1877 the number rose to more than five thousand, and in the spring and summer months of 1878 the inroads which the new organization was making in the Republican party were cause for serious alarm, and led to earnest discussion as to the best way to meet and quell the revolt. The timid were in favor of making, in the state

platform of the party, such a declaration of principle, or lack of principle, that desertion would cease and some at least of the deserters would be drawn back into the ranks. That was not Mr. Blaine's view of political duty. "The Republican party may be doomed this year to general defeat," he wrote to one of the timorous souls, "but you will pardon me for saying that if it should attempt to assume the ground indicated by you, it would be covered with ridicule and could not escape ignominy. There are to be two parties in this country on the question of the finances: the one for 'honest money,' the other for 'wild inflation,' — the one for maintaining the national honor, the other leading to the verge and possibly leaping over the precipice of repudiation."

The Republicans of Maine stood by their record in favor of "honest money," and were defeated. At that time an actual majority of votes was required to elect a governor. The combined vote of the Democrats and the Greenbackers exceeded that of the Republicans by some ten thousand. By fusion upon candidates they carried the legislature; and in accordance with the constitutional system the legislature elected as governor the Democratic candidate, and divided the other state offices between them. For the first time in sixteen years the Republicans did not elect a full delegation of members of Congress. A

Democrat and a Greenbacker were chosen in two of the five districts. In not one of the five did the Republican candidate receive a clear majority.

After the Maine election had resulted in an honorable defeat, Mr. Blaine responded to the loud calls that had been coming to him from other states, and entered upon a notable campaigning tour in the West. It might rather be called a triumphal progress, for he was everywhere received with an enthusiasm which indicated the highest popularity. The Republican newspapers of the cities in which he was announced to speak began days in advance of his arrival to sound his praise and to call the attention of their readers to the political feast that was in store for them. His movements were chronicled as though he were a prince. His admirers assembled in great throngs at the railway stations through which he was to pass, crowds of men greeted him on his arrival in the cities where he was to speak, the surrounding country poured out its thousands to swell his audience. His reception in Iowa was particularly noteworthy, and the newspapers of that state could find no words too extravagant to apply to him.

A remarkable situation developed in Maine after the state election in September, 1879. The entire state government was in the hands of the Fusionists — Democrats and Greenbackers. After

an earnest contest the Republicans regained most of the ground they had lost the year before. Their candidate for governor received a substantial plurality of the votes, although not the majority necessary to elect him; and both branches of the legislature were recovered. Not long after the election, when it was supposed that the result was known beyond all doubt, rumors began to fly about in Democratic circles that the governor and council had discovered grave errors in the returns and that a majority of Fusionists had been elected to the legislature. In Republican circles the version of the affair was that the governor and council were plotting to reverse the actual result of the election, and to "count out" the Republican majority. Ultimately it was proved beyond question or dispute that the Republican version was correct. The official returns were, under the law, in the custody of the governor and his council, all of whom were Fusionists, elected by the legislature in January, 1879. It was never proved, — indeed the matter was never fully investigated, — who actually committed the frauds, but it is wholly impossible that they should have been committed without the guilty connivance of many of the chief men in the state government. The names of Republican candidates were changed on many of the returns, as, for example, by crossing a T, the middle initial of

a candidate's name, thus changing it to an F, in the official return of a town, and thus making the votes for the Republican candidate in that town "scattering." A great variety of such alterations were made, in every case to the loss of Republican candidates for the legislature. Some real errors were discovered in returns favorable to Fusionists, and these were returned to Fusionist town clerks for correction. No Republican was permitted to see the returns, and as it was not known in which cities and towns the pretended errors had been found, no corrected returns could be obtained to substitute for those which had been tampered with and falsified.

Every change cost the Republicans a member; no Democrat or Greenbacker lost his seat. The alterations were just sufficient to return a Fusion majority to each House. The governor and council issued certificates to those thus counted in. Of course a fraud of this sort, if successful so far as the organization of the legislature was concerned, could not be overthrown. No Republican contestant would be admitted, and the legislature, which would continue to be Fusionist to the end, would elect a Fusionist governor, council, and all state officers, — for in Maine no state officer except the governor is elected by the people.

Mr. Blaine was again campaigning in the West when this plot was hatched, but on learning what

was doing he hurried home, and from first to last managed the rescue of the state from the hands of the conspirators. The situation was most difficult. A majority of those who held certificates of election to the Senate and House of Representatives were Fusionists, and there was not one among all those who had been counted in and who knew that they had not been elected, who had sufficient political honor and self-respect to decline his certificate or even to absent himself from the meeting of the legislature. Those who held these certificates had the advantage of regularity. The State House was in possession of the Fusionist governor and council. Moreover, not merely were threats made that the Fusion legislature should be installed by force, if necessary, but the adherents of the state government assembled at Augusta prepared and equipped themselves to carry out the threats. As the time for the meeting of the legislature drew near, the State House was made ready to resist a siege, and armed men were quartered and fed within it.

The Republicans were resolved that the fraud should not be consummated, and many of them were in favor of meeting force with force. Mr. Blaine, to whose opinion all the cooler men deferred, and whose plan of operation they adopted, would have no violence. He had a better way in mind. It would occupy too much space to tell the

whole story of the conflict. Fortunately the major-general of the militia of Maine was ex-Governor Joshua L. Chamberlain, a prominent general of the Civil War, and he placed himself on the side of fairness and honesty. Although there were rival legislatures for a time, the Republicans managed, under the guidance of Blaine, to get the whole question before the Supreme Court of the state, which decided unanimously that the legislature, consisting of the Republicans who held certificates and those who had been counted out, constituted the legal legislature. The Fusionists yielded at last with bad grace, the Republican candidate for governor was declared elected, the other state officers were chosen and installed in office, and the danger of violence came to an end. Subsequently a joint committee investigated the alteration of the returns and issued a report in which specimens of the alterations and forgeries were printed in facsimile. A minority of the committee reported briefly that "though they cannot deny that the recital of facts in the [majority] report is substantially in accordance with the evidence," they could not "give their assent to all of the arguments and conclusions of such majority report." They abstained from specifying to which of the conclusions they did not agree. But they did express their regret that not one of the members

of the council had attempted "to explain the irregularities which seem to exist." Only one member of the council had responded to the request to appear before the committee, and "he failed to explain the irregularities which had been proved."

The daring attempt to steal the state government is thus practically admitted by the two high-minded Fusionists who served on the committee. The credit of thwarting the plot was universally ascribed to Blaine alone, although, of course, much of his success was due to the cordial and courageous coöperation of General Chamberlain. It is not generally known, though it was always suspected, that Mr. Blaine was in danger of his life during those stirring days in January, 1880. But it is a fact. Not long ago a visitor at the State House informed the state librarian that he and another Fusionist were stationed in the cupola of the State House, and that one day they saw Blaine walking up and down in his back yard, only a few hundred yards away. His companion raised his rifle and aimed at Blaine, but he — the librarian's informant, — compelled the man to lower his arm, and the shot was not fired.

It was now the year of the presidential election. Congress had been more than a month in session, and president-making was, much more than legislation, the occupation of the minds of public

men. The movement to make Blaine the Republican candidate had lost none of its force since 1876, had, indeed, rather increased in momentum. Yet he could not be induced to do anything to promote his own candidacy; he could not even be persuaded to leave Augusta and go to the scene of action until the "count-out" had been defeated by the judgment of the Supreme Court. Nor after he returned to Washington did he adopt a course differing in any respect from that which he had pursued in 1876. Those who busied themselves to promote his candidacy did so in their own way without instructions or guidance from him. He would not have been the man he was if he had been indifferent, or if he had not been touched by the ardent devotion of his friends. But, past master in the arts of politics and of electioneering though he was, he had no personal part in the work of obtaining delegates to the convention.

The political situation at that time was peculiar. In 1876 the influence of General Grant's administration had been hostile to Blaine, and had been divided between Morton and Conkling. Grant himself had taken offence at something said or done by Blaine, and the two men were not on speaking terms. Conkling's lifelong hostility was well known. Some of Blaine's friends attributed his defeat in 1876 to Conk-

ling's management, and it is certain that the transfer of the New York vote to Hayes at Cincinnati decided that contest. In 1880 Grant had returned from his grand tour around the world, during which he was fêted and honored as few men have been who wore crowns, and the idea was broached that, although a third term for a president immediately following two continuous terms was contrary to American tradition and to good policy, a third term after an interim of four years was not objectionable. Mr. Conkling was the prime mover in the attempt to nominate General Grant, for at that time his own candidacy was hopeless. The idea of a third term for the general was exceedingly attractive to a large number of Republicans and the movement had surprising success.

So far as the list of candidates for the nomination was concerned, the condition was analogous to that in 1876. The Grant forces, if they may be so denominated, which had been divided between Senators Morton and Conkling, were now united in favor of Grant himself, and they were augmented by a majority of the votes of Pennsylvania, which, under the guiding hand of Mr. J. Donald Cameron, had been brought to the support of the third term, together with more than one half of those of Illinois, which were secured by the influence of General John A. Logan.

All combined they made General Grant the leading candidate. Senator John Sherman succeeded to the vote of Ohio, given four years before to Governor Hayes, who was not a candidate for reëlection, and he also had a part of the anti-Blaine vote cast for Bristow in 1876, the rest of which was bestowed upon Senator George F. Edmunds, of Vermont and upon Mr. Elihu B. Washburne, of Illinois. Mr. Windom, of Minnesota, took the place as a minor candidate held four years before by Governor Jewell, of Connecticut.

The fundamental difference between the situation in the two conventions was that in 1876 there was but one candidate against whom the friends of all the others were ready, for various reasons, to combine, although not ready to combine to support any one man; whereas in 1880 there were two candidates, nearly equally matched in the number of their supporters, and having more than three fourths of all the delegates, to both of whom most of the other delegates were strongly opposed. Had not the friends of Grant and of Blaine been also mutually antagonistic, one or the other of them would have been nominated. But Mr. Conkling, who led the Grant contingent with force and skill, was as earnest in his effort to defeat Blaine as he was to carry the nomination for his own candidate. Blaine, too, who watched

the contest from his library in Washington, and was in constant consultation with his representatives at Chicago, aside from his personal interest in his own fortunes, and his opposition on principle to a third term, had both his own grievance against General Grant, and more than one old score against Mr. Conkling, as motives to deter him from consenting that any of his own supporters should go over to Grant. The outcome of these several antagonisms, when it developed, seemed not only natural, but inevitable. Yet it was not reached until it was evident that neither of the two leading candidates could be nominated.

It was a long contest. The roll of states was not called the first time for the nomination of a candidate for President until the fifth day of the convention. General Grant had 304 votes and Mr. Blaine had 284, just one vote less than he received on the first trial of strength in the convention of 1876. The roll was called again and again, until on that day the delegates had recorded themselves twenty-eight times. Not once did General Grant receive more than 309 votes or less than 302. Mr. Blaine's vote varied between 285 and 276. On the next day eight votes more were taken. Grant's supporters held firm, and on the thirty-fifth vote increased to 313. A diversion in favor of Senator John Sherman took place, chiefly to the disadvantage of Mr. Blaine, who had

but 270 on the thirty-second vote. The impossibility of nominating either of the leading candidates, as well as the disinclination of the convention to unite on Mr. Sherman, being now manifest, a movement in favor of General Garfield was begun. Garfield was a member of the convention, was the recognized leader and manager of Sherman's candidacy, and had been conspicuously and agreeably prominent in the proceedings. There is no doubt that Blaine himself sanctioned and encouraged the break in General Garfield's favor, and on the thirty-sixth vote he was nominated. Grant held firmly his 306 votes, two more than he had at the beginning.

Although Blaine was defeated, the dogged persistence of his adherents was, as it was also in the case of General Grant, a great personal triumph. As in 1876, his support was far more general than was that of any other candidate. First and last there were only six of the forty-seven States and territories which did not give him a single vote, — Arkansas, Colorado, Missouri, North Carolina, Vermont, — and Massachusetts. The attack upon the Commonwealth when the statue of Governor King was presented was not forgotten. General Grant had votes from only twenty-nine states and territories when his support was at its maximum, and on the final vote from only twenty-five. Moreover, no less than 120

of Grant's votes, on the first roll-call, were given by delegates from the twelve states of the Confederacy, not one of which would give a single electoral vote for the Republican candidate, against twenty-six votes from the same states for Blaine.

As has been already remarked, Conkling was held answerable, by many of Blaine's friends, for the defeat of his nomination in 1876. Undoubtedly it was due to the same gentleman that he was not nominated in 1880. The Hon. Charles Emory Smith has made an exceedingly interesting contribution to political history in connection with this convention.[1] He says that Senator John P. Jones, of Nevada, a close friend of Conkling, took frequent occasion before the convention met to urge upon him and other Grant leaders that they should make Blaine the candidate if they could not nominate the general. There is reason to believe that the idea was favorably received by Conkling, for his biographer quotes him as having declared "that either Grant or Blaine should be nominated; there must be no dark horse."[2] Mr. Smith reports that after the nomination was made Conkling said to him "that he would far rather have had Blaine nominated than Garfield."

[1] Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, June 8, 1901.
[2] P. 660.

On the other hand Blaine was not strongly opposed at that time to the nomination of Conkling. Mr. Smith says that Senator Henry W. Blair, of New Hampshire, suggested to Blaine that if he could not be nominated it would be well to take Conkling, and Blaine agreed that Conkling was a strong man and that he could carry the necessary state of New York. "Yes," he said, "nominate Conkling if you think best." Mr. Blaine's words were reported through a third person to Conkling, who received the suggestion with surprise, but expressed his irrevocable determination to bring about the nomination of Grant if possible. On the second day of the voting for a candidate the symptoms of a break in favor of General Garfield appeared on the thirty-fifth roll-call. When, on the thirty-sixth trial, Maine itself transferred its votes to Garfield, Senator Jones went to Conkling and urged him to stop the stampede by casting the whole vote of the state for Blaine. Conkling replied that there was not time to poll the delegation. "Cast the vote and poll the delegation afterward," replied Jones. Conkling hesitated, but could not bring himself to follow the course proposed. Again New York gave fifty votes to Grant, and the other twenty to Garfield. The stampede continued, and Garfield was chosen. There was probably never afterward an occa-

sion so favorable as was this for a reconciliation between the long estranged statesmen, a reconciliation which, if it could have been hearty and sincere, might have changed greatly the political history of the country, perhaps even the entire history of the countries of the two American continents.

No nomination could have been more agreeable and satisfactory to Mr. Blaine personally than that of General Garfield. They had been not merely friendly, but intimate, from the day in December, 1863, when they each for the first time took a seat in the House of Representatives. They did not always agree on public questions, but their principles and political ideals were substantially identical.

Mr. Blaine entered the political canvass with enthusiasm, and devoted more than usual attention to the election in Maine. The constitution of that state had just been changed, so that now a plurality was sufficient for the election of a governor. The Fusionists united on one candidate and carried the state by a majority of two or three hundred, but this was changed to a plurality of about 9000 for Garfield in November. Mr. Blaine gave the last two months of the campaign to a stumping tour in the West, where, as always, he was greatly in demand.

During the whole canvass he was in constant

correspondence with Garfield, who even consulted with him in the preparation of his letter of acceptance. He asked advice specifically on four points, and as to two of them, the Chinese question and the civil service plank, he requested Blaine to draft the necessary paragraphs.[1] Mr. Blaine complied only so far as to suggest the proper stand, in his opinion, to be taken on the Chinese question. He assured the general that he needed help from no man on the financial question; and "you will find it easy to treat it [the Southern question] in a manner that will satisfy all shades of Republican opinion."

General Garfield was triumphantly elected in November, and before the month closed he had tendered to Blaine the office of Secretary of State. The offer was not immediately accepted, for notwithstanding the honor which the position implied, it was not at once clear that duties so radically different from those that had occupied him during the eighteen years of his public life in Washington would be as congenial as those arising from a membership in the Senate, from which only a political revolution could remove him. But while he was considering the matter, he was not sparing of his advice to the President-elect as to the other portfolios, and as to the general course

[1] Garfield to Blaine, June 29, 1880. Gail Hamilton's *Life of Blaine*, p. 486.

of his administration. In a remarkable letter to Garfield, written on December 10, 1880,[1] he analyzes the three forces in the Republican convention and comments upon them singly. Grant had the delegates from only thirty-two sure Republican districts in the country; Sherman, Edmunds, and Washburne had thirty-six; he, Blaine, had ninety-nine. This situation suggested to him the threefold division of the party: "first, the great body of the North, with congressional representation and electoral strength behind it, is with the section which for convenience of designation I will call the Blaine section, — I mean the strength behind me in two national conventions. . . . Now this Blaine section is all yours, with some additional strength that Blaine could not get, and represents the reliable strong background of preference, friendship, and love on which your administration must rest for success. I use the designation 'Blaine' only for convenience to identify the class. They are now all Garfield without rebate or reserve, 'waiving demand and notice.'"

The second class was "the Grant section, taking all the South practically, with the machine in New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois — and having the aid of rule or ruin leaders." The third section consisted of "the reformers by profes-

[1] Gail Hamilton's *Life of Blaine*, p. 490.

sion" whom Mr. Blaine never esteemed highly as political guides, and of whom, in this letter, he speaks in derogatory terms. "They are to be treated with respect, but they are the worst possible political advisers."

All this was preliminary to the proposition, "You are to have a second term or to be overthrown." He advised Garfield that his true friends were to be found in the first section; that the second section would "accept your administration because they cannot help it," but would always be on the watch for an opening for "a restoration of Grant;" that "the third section can be made to coöperate harmoniously with the first, but *never* with the second, — you can see that at a glance," and that "they can be easily dealt with and can be hitched to your administration with ease." The letter was not specific in advice as to methods, but its general purport was clearly that great skill would be required in handling the three sections so as to keep the party harmonious. Garfield in reply asked Blaine's views as to the best method of recognizing the Grant section, "so as not to be shackled and yet to do fair justice." There was evidently further correspondence on the subject, for Blaine in one letter expressed an opinion that the "second section" would take a proposed cabinet appointment favorably.

On the 20th of December Mr. Blaine accepted the tender of the State department. It is a pleasant evidence of the cordial personal relations between the families of the two men that the letter of acceptance was sent under cover to Mrs. Garfield, in order that she might be the first to receive it. The letter itself is one of the most striking productions of Mr. Blaine's pen, and is such a manifestation of friendship, loyalty, and self-abnegation as has rarely been made by one statesman toward another who might be regarded as, in a certain sense, a successful rival. Having expressed his gratitude for the offer and his acceptance of it, Mr. Blaine proceeded: —

"It is proper for me to add that I make this decision, not for the honor of the promotion it gives me in the public service, but because I believe I can be useful to the country and the party, — useful to you as the responsible leader of the party and the great head of the government. . . .

"In accepting this important post I shall give all that I am and all that I can hope to be freely and joyfully to your service. You need no pledge of my loyalty both in heart and in act. I should be false to myself did I not prove true to the great trust you confide to me, and to your own personal and political fortunes in the present and in the future.

"Your administration must be made bril-

liantly successful and strong in the confidence and pride of the people; not obviously directing its energies to reëlection, but compelling that result by the logic of events and by the imperious necessities of the situation.

"To that most desirable consummation I feel that, next to yourself, I can contribute more influence than any other man. I say this, not from egotism or vainglory, but merely as a deduction from an analysis of the political forces which have been at work in the country for five years past, and which will be operative for many years to come.

"I hail it as one of the happiest circumstances connected with this important affair that in allying my political fortunes with yours — or rather merging mine in yours — my heart goes with my head, and that I carry to you not only political support but personal and devoted friendship. I can but regard it as somewhat remarkable that two men of the same age, entering Congress at the same time, influenced by the same aims and ambitions, should never, for a single moment, in eighteen years, have a misunderstanding or a coolness, and that their friendship has steadily strengthened with their strength.

"It is this fact which has led me to the momentous conclusion embodied in this letter, — for however much I might admire you as a states-

man, I would not enter your cabinet if I did not believe in you as a man and love you as a friend."

The most malignant of Blaine's enemies has never insinuated that in his conduct he failed in the slightest degree to fulfil his pledge of absolute loyalty and devotion to the President. His ambition was not to promote his own fortunes, but to contribute all that he could toward making the reëlection of Garfield inevitable "by the logic of events and by the imperious necessities of the situation." He took the most eager interest in the choice of the other secretaries, and was most free with his advice both as to the principles that should govern the selection and as to the persons to whom portfolios should be offered. Inasmuch as the Garfield Cabinet was not, on the whole, a strong one, it has sometimes been charged that Blaine purposely induced the President to select men whom he could dominate, and that he did in fact wield an influence in the Cabinet which overshadowed that of the President himself, as well as that of his colleagues.

The accusation is not well founded. Mr. Blaine urged the choice of Senator Allison for the Treasury department from the beginning, and in the strongest terms he could command.[1] General Garfield agreed to the choice, but Mr.

[1] He was accused, by enemies who did not know, of having kept Mr. Allison out of the cabinet.

Allison could not be induced to leave the Senate. Blaine also assented in the most hearty way to the appointment of Mr. Wayne McVeagh as Attorney General, and supplied the President-elect with an additional reason for choosing him, although McVeagh was a strong man, and was then and afterward most unfriendly to the Secretary of State. The truth is, and was then, that a President can rarely persuade a man of the first rank to relinquish an assured position in either branch of Congress and exchange for it a brief tenure of an executive department. An examination of the recent lists of cabinet officers shows a steadily increasing number of men who have never previously held any office or position whatever under the national government.

It is true that the President leaned heavily and confidently upon his Secretary of State, consulted him at all times, and probably followed his advice almost invariably. But the same fact might almost certainly be stated with equal correctness another way: that the two men consulted together and were almost invariably agreed upon the course to be pursued, no matter which was the first to suggest it. For Garfield himself was a man of wide experience in public affairs, of strong opinions, and of sturdy principles, to which on more than one occasion he adhered obstinately when to do so seemed to ensure his

extinction as a public man. In whatever form the statement may be made, it is true that there were ties of the closest personal friendship and relations of the most unbounded mutual confidence between them.

The early days of the administration were marked by the unhappy episode of the New York collectorship and the breach with Senator Conkling. Once again Blaine and Conkling clashed, for rightly or wrongly the senator attributed the selection of Judge Robertson to the influence of the Secretary of State. It may be said of the incident that it was not an example of the skill which Blaine had a few months before declared to be required in handling the "second section" of the party, at the same time that it proved the truth of his remark in the same connection that the section contained "rule or ruin leaders."

But this little cloud would surely soon have disappeared from the sky, for the administration was winning its way to the hearts of the people when, on that fatal day in July, the President was laid low by the bullet of the assassin. Blaine was by his side, raised his head, and stood by him until he was removed to the White House, whence but a short hour before he had gone with the buoyant spirits of a college lad starting on his summer vacation. Then followed weary months of anxiety, brief flashes of hope alternating with

long periods of despairing solicitude, until the end came, in September. During the long weeks of the President's gradual decline, Mr. Blaine's task was one of extreme difficulty. He was at once the faithful friend, watching with fearful apprehension by the bedside of the suffering President; the trusted lieutenant, carrying on the business of his own department, and representing to a certain extent his chief in the oversight of the whole; and the agent of the people, through whom they obtained exact and truthful statements of the condition of the President from day to day. If we except the members of General Garfield's family, the mental strain endured by Mr. Blaine during these summer months was greater than that to which any other person was subjected; and when the President died, his personal grief and the probability, which soon became a certainty, that the great plans he had laid out for the future could not be consummated by him, combined to make the blow as severe as any statesman could receive. It is not too much to say that Blaine was never quite the same after the death of Garfield as he was before. The flow of animal spirits was not quite so free. The element of tragedy had entered into his life.[1] Less frequent

[1] Writing to his friend, the Hon. S. B. Elkins, September 30, he said, "The death of Garfield is a fresh grief to me. My enjoyment of public life seems gone."

became the occasions when he abandoned himself to his natural joviality, — when he gave the impression to those about him that he had the happy, care-free air of his early manhood. Perhaps the tone of greater seriousness which distinguished him from this time onward was not wholly the result of his grief and disappointment, but was due also in large measure to the fact that he was beginning more than ever to think great thoughts, to extend his vision beyond even the broad oceans that separated his country from the rest of the world, and to dream of the greatness and glory that now seem to be in store for it.

For in one important respect Blaine was different from every Secretary of State who preceded him in the office. He entered upon his duties with a distinct and definite purpose, to be carried into effect by the use of specific means to an end. A study of the diplomatic history of the United States will convince any candid mind that the policy of every Secretary of State before Blaine may be truly described as a waiting policy. It was so almost as a necessary consequence of the voluntary isolation of the country. Foreign enterprise was unknown to our diplomacy. The State department took up, discussed, and settled the questions brought before it, as they arose, whether the matter were a grievance of the government, or a claim against it, a boundary dis-

pute, or a proposition looking toward improved commercial relations. Every such question was dealt with individually, in accordance with the well-established and traditional policy. Unless a situation developed which required the government to assert its rights as against some other government which it held to be encroaching upon them, there was almost nothing of self-assertion and initiative upon the part of the United States. Even the Monroe Doctrine, the one distinctive principle of American diplomacy, which may be cited as an exception to the foregoing statements, was originally almost as much the act of Great Britain as of the United States, and the subsequent extensions of that doctrine have come about accidentally, in dealing with situations created by others than Americans. The explanation of the absence of general initiative on the part of Secretaries of State from Jefferson to Evarts — a roll of great men — is not that they lacked power, energy, and boldness, or breadth of conception, or patriotism. The country of set purpose chose to hold itself aloof from world-politics, engaged in warmly-worded diplomatic controversies only when its interests were directly at stake, suppressed its opinion upon the internal and international difficulties of other nations save only when it observed a people endeavoring to overthrow an "effete monarchy."

That was a wise and proper policy — for the times — of non-interference and non-participation in the intrigues and disputes of the Old World. But in Mr. Blaine's opinion the time had come when the logic of the Monroe Doctrine should be enforced by the adoption of an American continental system. From the very beginning of the Garfield administration he undertook, with the President's full sanction, to carry out the plan which he had conceived on a grand scale. There were two general principles underlying his policy. The first, desirable in itself and necessary to the application of the other, was that wars between the independent countries of the two Americas must be made to cease. The other was that, as Providence had made of these countries neighbors in a peculiar sense, they should be mutually helpful to one another in trade and commerce. It was an essential part of the scheme that the United States, the leader in wealth, power, international standing, and governmental stability, should be the friend and adviser of all the rest, that it should ever be ready to arbitrate between any two American countries, but never to intervene forcibly to compose their quarrel. By making itself, under the Monroe Doctrine, an effective protector of all the countries against European attack, and by the great moral forces of precept and example an agent of universal

peace on the two continents, this country would win the cordial good will of all the governments and their people. By natural consequence it would thus prepare the way for a vast extension of trade, which would be all the greater when internal and external peace should take the place of the traditional turbulence and disorder of the Spanish-American republics.

The Secretary was to have a fuller opportunity to carry this policy into effect than he had in 1881, but he entered upon it without any apprehension of the obstacles which the death of the President would create. He found a war in progress between Chile on the one side and Peru and Bolivia on the other, which ended shortly after the beginning of the administration in a complete victory for Chile. He undertook to mitigate the hardship of the conditions of peace imposed by the victor. There was imminent danger of an outbreak of war between Mexico and Guatemala. As early as the middle of June, 1881, Blaine was urging the government of Mexico "to avert a conflict with Guatemala, by diplomatic means or, these failing, by arbitration." There was a long-standing boundary dispute between Chile and Argentina. Mr. Blaine took an early opportunity to impress upon the ministers to the two countries the wish of the President that the question be submitted to arbitration. Fortu-

nately, negotiations to that end were almost completed before Mr. Blaine's despatch was written, although the fact was not known in Washington until long afterward.

The new policy involved two great projects. The French company organized by M. de Lesseps was preparing to construct the Panama Canal. A situation of peculiar difficulty was thereby created. Although private enterprise and private capital alone would be enlisted, yet vested interests of overwhelming importance to French citizens might, and almost certainly would, at some time in the future, bring about conditions that would involve the government of France in a collision with the government of Colombia. In that event the principles of the Monroe Doctrine might be invoked to protect Colombia against an invasion and a permanent occupation of its territory, and thus endanger the relations with France itself. There was a treaty, made in 1846, between the United States and New Grenada, now Colombia, which gave the United States important rights. Among them was that of free transit over the isthmus of Panama, and by implication the right to secure freedom of transit by the use of force when imperilled by the lawlessness of Colombian citizens. But there was also the Clayton-Bulwer treaty between the United States and Great Britain, by the terms of

which the two countries united in a guaranty of the neutrality of any canal that might be cut through the isthmus. For a variety of reasons this treaty complicated the situation, and Blaine lost no time in undertaking to secure a modification which would leave the United States free to deal with the isthmian question untrammelled by foreign engagements. He wrote a powerful despatch on the subject, to be submitted to the British Foreign Secretary, which, if his tenure of office had been longer, he would have followed up; and perhaps he would have brought about negotiations for the abrogation of the treaty. He was savagely criticised for stirring up this question, and was accused of taking a course that would imbroil this country with Great Britain. But the present generation, which has seen his undertaking brought to successful accomplishment by Secretary Hay, knows that his effort was wise, even necessary.

The grandest and most comprehensive measure in this general policy was an assemblage of representatives of all the independent governments of the western hemisphere for the express purpose of ensuring permanent peace, and of promoting enterprises that would bind all the countries together in friendship. It was a more far-reaching scheme than Henry Clay's Panama congress, because the lapse of more than half a

century had indicated clearly the evils to be cured, and because the danger of foreign aggression had ceased and left the way open for the adoption of measures that could not have been deemed even possible in the time of the second Adams.

President Garfield had already given his approval of the plan to summon a Pan-American Congress, when he received the assassin's bullet. Mr. Blaine's despatch to Mr. Lowell, the minister to England, opening the question of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, was dated June 24, 1881, a week before that day of calamity. Consequently both these acts may be regarded as acts of the Garfield administration. The death of the President and the succession of Mr. Arthur changed the entire situation. Mr. Blaine had, and could have had, no expectation of retaining his portfolio under the new régime. Three days after the death of Garfield, September 22, he tendered his resignation, as is usual in such cases. President Arthur requested all the members of the Cabinet to remain in office until the regular meeting of Congress in December. On October 13, Blaine again offered to resign; he was again asked to hold his portfolio until December, and he did so.

President Arthur seemed to be in full accord with Mr. Blaine's plans and purposes. Ineffi-

ciency or something worse on the part of the diplomatic representatives of the government in Chile and Peru made their efforts to bring about peace between these countries on reasonable terms quite futile. Mr. Blaine proposed to send a special mission to South America to deal with that matter only. The President agreed to the plan. The person chosen to head the mission was Mr. William H. Trescott, a diplomatist of experience and good judgment, and with him was associated Mr. Walker Blaine, the eldest son of the Secretary, whom President Garfield, on the morning after his inauguration, had appointed Third Assistant Secretary of State, in which capacity he practically occupied the position of private secretary to his father. The two gentlemen started on their journey southward at the beginning of December.

The President acceded also to Mr. Blaine's proposition that the American countries should be invited to meet in general conference, and on the 29th of November an invitation was sent to all those countries except the three which had not yet come to terms, to send representatives to Washington, to meet on November 24, 1882. The invitation was sent in the name of the President, and the purpose of the Congress was declared to be that of "considering and discussing the methods of preventing war between the nations

of America." The President desired, wrote Mr. Blaine, "that the attention of the Congress shall be strictly confined to this one great object; that its sole aim shall be to seek a way of permanently averting the horrors of cruel and bloody combat between countries, oftenest of one blood and speech, or the even worse calamity of internal commotion and civil strife; that it shall consider the burdensome and far-reaching consequences of such struggles, the legacies of exhausted finances, of oppressive debt, of onerous taxation, of ruined cities, of paralyzed industries, of devastated fields, of ruthless conscription, of the slaughter of men, of the grief of the widow and the orphan, of embittered resentments that long survive those who provoked them and heavily afflict the innocent generations that come after."

Mr. Blaine took especial pains in advance to disabuse the invited nations of the idea that the United States was to prejudge the issues to be presented to the Congress, or that it would appear "as, in any sense, the protector of its neighbors or the predestined and necessary arbiter of their disputes." The country was to enter into the deliberations of the Congress "on the same footing as the other powers represented," with no intention of asserting its own power, "but as a single member among many coördinate and coequal states." The time for the meeting of the

Congress was purposely set at a day so distant that there would be a good prospect that peace would be wholly restored between the countries still nominally at war; and meantime, in view of the circumstances, the invitation to those countries was withheld.

The invitation was dated November 29, 1881. A fortnight later, on December 12, the President nominated Senator Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, to be Secretary of State, and on the 19th Mr. Blaine retired from the office. For the first time since the 4th of March, 1863, he was not in public life. He went into retirement with the best of feeling toward the President and toward his successor. He had set in motion a great enterprise, and although he was not to have the satisfaction of carrying it through, the initiative was his, and if the project succeeded he could felicitate himself on having done a beneficent work for his country, for all the peoples of the two Americas, and for mankind. He was in high spirits, and enjoyed the freedom from public cares. His hope that his policy was to be continued was strengthened by Frelinghuysen's voluntary assurance that he desired Blaine's son Walker to remain in the public service. But Frelinghuysen was a Secretary of State of the type of those who had preceded Blaine. He was able, patriotic, and conserv-

ative. He was not disposed to pursue a general policy such as had been planned for him. It is not suggested that anything of personal feeling or of jealousy entered into the case. Mr. Arthur also was conservative. It is not quite easy to see why the President, having approved Blaine's project of sending a mission to South America, and his grand scheme of a Congress of American republics, should have reversed the policy in both matters, or should have agreed to a reversal if suggested by his new Secretary. But reversed the policy was, and in such a way as to be most annoying and even humiliating to Mr. Blaine. True, there was an outburst of ill-tempered criticism of Blaine's action. A malicious insinuation was spread abroad that his mission to Chile and Peru covered a scheme for money-making in certain guano-beds in the territory which Chile proposed to take from its conquered enemy. That matter was investigated, and the absolute baselessness of the accusation was abundantly proved. The idea was industriously circulated by newspapers always hostile to Blaine, that his policy was meddlesome, sensational, dangerous, that he was taking steps that would involve the country in war, or at least in complications not compatible with the traditional policy against "entangling alliances." He was blamed, as has been remarked already, for reopening the ques-

tion of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and stirring up bad blood between this country and Great Britain. But it is difficult to see how these attacks could have had any influence with the President, who was far from being sympathetic toward the particular wing of the Republican party with which the assault upon Mr. Blaine originated. He belonged to the "second section" of the party, and abhorred the third section — a sentiment which was reciprocated. The summary of the discarded policy, which has been given for the most part in the words of the official despatches, will show how absurd was the clamor that was raised against it. The key-word of the whole plan was Peace. Unless it can be maintained that a meeting of statesmen summoned for the sole purpose of making peace perpetual, by devising a scheme of general arbitration, is in itself a disturbance of peace and provocative of war, the criticism of Blaine's great measure is unjust. Yet practically that position was taken by the new administration.

Mr. Frelinghuysen, in the name of the President, practically withdrew the invitation on January 9, 1882, six weeks after it was sent out, when some of the governments invited had already signified their acceptance of it. The Secretary of State wrote that the President wished "hereafter to determine whether it will conduce to the general

peace, which he would cherish and promote, for this government to enter into negotiations and consultation for the promotion of peace with selected friendly nationalities, without extending the line of confidence to other people with whom the United States is on equally friendly terms. If such partial confidence would create jealousy and ill will, peace, the object sought by such consultation, would not be promoted." Mr. Blaine, on the 3d of February, addressed a letter to the President, in which he dealt sharply with the suggestion that it was necessary for the United States to secure the approval of European powers for any plan this government might form to secure peace on the American continents, or that there was any reason to apprehend that they would be jealous or hostile if they were not admitted to the conference. Nor could they be moved by ill will, "unless indeed it be the interest of the European powers that the American nations should at intervals fall into war and bring reproach on republican institutions."

"Impudent" was the adjective which the carping enemies of Mr. Blaine applied to this letter. They fancied him posing as the political legatee of Garfield, declared that his public career was ended, and congratulated the country that it had been delivered from a bellicose and swaggering Secretary. Certainly his position at

that time was not promising, for none of his friends could come out openly in defence of his policy without to that extent deserting the administration. Blaine himself would not have wished them to do that, great as was his exasperation. Indeed, at that time foreign questions interested the people but mildly. The President waited until April, and then sent a message to Congress transmitting a copy of Blaine's circular invitation, and asking the opinion of the Senate and House of Representatives as to the expediency of holding the proposed Congress of nations. He probably expected no response to his request, at any rate he received none, and the invitation was subsequently formally withdrawn.

Not less humiliating to Mr. Blaine, although far less important than the reversal of his policy just mentioned, was the course pursued with reference to the special mission of Trescott and Walker Blaine. On the 24th of January, 1882, the House of Representatives passed a resolution asking for the correspondence between the representatives of the United States and the governments of Chile and Peru relative to the negotiation of peace between the South American republics. Instead of replying that it was not compatible with the public interest to communicate the despatches, the Secretary of State sent them all to the House and they were at

once published. The despatches included even the instructions under which Messrs. Trescott and Blaine were acting. The cable carried them immediately to the government of Chile. Trescott had arranged a meeting to take place on the 31st of January with Señor Balmaceda, the Chilean Secretary of State, at which Walker Blaine was to be present and to deliver the invitation to the Peace Congress. When the three gentlemen met and Trescott explained the object of Blaine's presence, Balmaceda exclaimed, "It is useless. Your government has withdrawn the invitation." Trescott's account of the interview [1] proceeds: —

"Seeing, I suppose, an expression of astonishment which I did not pretend to conceal, he added, 'Your own instructions have been changed. Your instructions from Mr. Blaine have been published, and others are on their way to you modifying your original instructions in very important particulars. The whole question about Calderon [the Calderon government of Peru] is out of the way and you are told to be entirely neutral.'"

So it was. The envoys of the United States received the first intimation that their instructions were modified, and learned the nature of

[1] *Foreign Relations*, 2d Sess. 57th Congress, Mr. Trescott to Mr. Frelinghuysen, p. 67.

the modification, from one of the parties with whom they were to negotiate. No means could have been devised better calculated than this to render the mission futile. Mr. Trescott afterward expressed the opinion that under his original instructions he would have succeeded in bringing about a peace treaty, speedily, and on better terms for the conquered countries, than were the terms of the treaty which was ultimately made. It is needless to dwell upon the weakness and vacillation of the State department, or upon the loss of national prestige that followed inevitably.

In February, 1882, Mr. Blaine made his last public appearance in the hall of the House of Representatives, the scene of his longest service and of his most brilliant triumphs. He had been invited to deliver a eulogy upon President Garfield. At first he declined the duty, in the belief that his motive in accepting it would be misunderstood, certainly misrepresented. But the committee of the House would not accept his declination, and at last he consented. He spent a great deal of time upon the preparation of the eulogy, revised it with the utmost care, and asked for the judgment of many of his friends upon phrases and passages before its form was finally determined. It was delivered before an immense concourse of eminent men on the 27th

of February, 1882. In literary style, in dignity of tone, in keenness of analytical insight into the character of his subject, above all in that subtile quality of tender sympathy which touches the hearts of men, the eulogy upon Garfield is not excelled by any similar production, and will always be a classic. What more tender and felicitously worded passage can be cited than that with which he closed?

"Gently, silently, the love of a great people bore the pale sufferer to the longed-for healing of the sea, to live or to die as God should will, within sight of its heaving billows, within sound of its manifold voices. With wan, fevered face tenderly lifted to the cooling breeze, he looked out wistfully upon the ocean's changing wonders; on its far sails whitening in the morning light; on its restless waves rolling shoreward to break and die beneath the noonday sun; on the red clouds of evening, arching low to the horizon; on the serene and shining pathway of the stars. Let us think that his dying eyes read a mystic meaning which only the rapt and parting soul may know. Let us believe that in the silence of the receding world he heard the great waves breaking on a farther shore, and felt already upon his wasted brow the breath of the eternal morning."

IX

CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY

WHETHER or not Mr. Blaine's public career was ended, it was interrupted. But he could not be idle, and he turned his attention to new things with zest. He had already begun the erection of a large house for his own occupation, fronting on one of the beautiful open spaces in Washington, and spent much time in watching and overseeing the work. There were many propositions as to his future course which he had to consider. His old constituency in Maine wished him to resume his seat in the House of Representatives; but, with gratitude to those who made the suggestion, he declined to reënter public life by that avenue. He was urged to prepare and deliver lectures, but the suggestion was not attractive to him. Publishers sought him with plans for books which he was to write. Work of that sort was to his taste, and after hesitating some time between several schemes which he considered, he determined upon a work combining political history, politics, and personal reminiscence. The result was his "Twenty Years of Congress." Although the second volume of this work was not published

until 1886, nearly or quite four years after he began the first volume, it will be most convenient not to recur to the subject, but to speak of it in this place.

The work covers the period between 1861 and 1881, but almost one half of the first volume — more than two hundred and fifty pages — is occupied with a comprehensive and masterly review of the events which led up to the formation of the Republican party, the election of Lincoln, and the secession of the Southern States. The rest of the work consists of statements of the great issues that arose during the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction, the management of those questions by the party in power, the attitude of the opposition, and the part taken in the struggles by the chief actors in political life at the time. The whole is interspersed with brief characterization of the prominent men of the epoch under treatment, most of whom Mr. Blaine knew personally, all of whom he knew by their acts and words. He not only entered upon the work *con amore*, but continued to the end to keep his interest in the task. His labor upon it was interrupted by the campaign of 1884, but after his defeat for the presidency he resumed it with unabated zeal.

His method was characteristic of him. He had a wonderful memory, which was not specialized

but extended over the whole range of his knowledge. Faces, names, dates, statistics, political events and the actors in them, in short everything that pertained to the history of his country, was always at his tongue's end. Gail Hamilton narrates[1] that on the occasion of the visit of Robert C. Winthrop to Washington to be present at the dedication of the Washington monument, Mr. Blaine invited Mr. Winthrop and Hannibal Hamlin to luncheon. In the course of the conversation the question came up who were the senators from the several States in the Congress of 1849–51, when Mr. Winthrop was a member of the Senate. Blaine repeated the whole list without a mistake.

Nevertheless he subjected the intimations of such an accurate memory to rigid verification, much of which was performed under his direction by his secretary, Mr. Sherman. He never acquired the art of dictating with facility, but wrote the manuscript with his own hand. Then a fair copy of it was made by another, — for the type-writer was not then in general use, — and Mr. Blaine afterward revised his work with painstaking industry. Moreover, when the proofs came to him from the printing-office, he corrected and revised again and again, to the despair of the publisher, since the corrections added greatly

[1] *Life of Blaine*, p. 571.

to the cost of production and delayed the publication. Some parts of the second volume, passages not requiring the most careful thought in preparation, were dictated to an amanuensis, but like all the rest were afterward edited most carefully.

The work is eminently worthy of the author. No other book covering any period of American political history is so full and comprehensive or displays such intimate knowledge of men and events. The only work that can be compared with it is Benton's "Thirty Years' View," and that is inferior to Blaine's "Twenty Years" because the author of it was too violent a partisan to see the other side of any question, and too egotistical to yield more than half the space to others than himself. Blaine, on the other hand, rarely refers to himself as taking any part in public affairs, quotes none of his own speeches, and refrains from paying off old scores. Instead of representing his party and himself as having been always in the right, he writes with the utmost frankness in criticism of acts in which he had participated, and of votes to which he had responded with an "ay." He is at his best in his characterization of statesmen of his own time and of an earlier era. Particularly in dealing with those from whom he had differed politically his language is respectful, appreciative,

and sweet. He had occasion many times to refer to Mr. Conkling, but he did not write a word to intimate that he had ever been on other than amicable terms with that gentleman, nor a word that might not have been penned by an admirer. Two exceptions must be noted, for upon two of his contemporaries he did pour vials of scorn. His provocation was great in both cases, but it is a pity that his self-restraint gave way even once.

It is needless to say that Mr. Blaine's narrative of events contains the essential facts and omits the unimportant, that his analysis of conditions is keen and philosophical and calmly judicial, and that the whole work is dignified in tone and in good temper. There is not a wrong-minded sentence in it, not a sentence which is offensively partisan, or malevolent, or derogatory to the motives of others. In all these respects it was characteristic of the author, who never cherished animosities, or took uncharitable views of the conduct even of those who opposed him. Finally, the "Twenty Years" is written in a most lucid and felicitous style, and with a literary polish that was habitual in all his speeches and writings.

The interval between Mr. Blaine's retirement from the State department and the beginning of the stirring campaign of 1884 was to him a

period of unusual enjoyment and satisfaction. In a certain coterie of journalism he was looked upon as such a complete embodiment of the spirit of evil that, even in his retirement, he was watched lest haply some malign plot against the happiness and welfare of his country should be hatched by him and carried into execution before the vigilant sentinels could warn the nation of its peril. They fancied that behind the screen of apparent absorption in literary work and in the enjoyment of his home he was engaged in constant intrigue to restore himself to his former position of leadership. In fact, he was employed in a most congenial literary task, which promised and eventually gave him a rich pecuniary reward. It was work at home which enabled him to be constantly with those whom he loved best, his devoted wife and his dearly loved children, — two sons and a daughter, and then, after a long interval, two other daughters and a son. The oldest son, Walker, who resigned his position in the State department after his return from South America, had been appointed assistant counsel for the distribution of the Geneva Award. The second son, Emmons, had begun an apprenticeship to the railway business, and resided near at hand in Baltimore. The oldest daughter, Alice, was happily married to Colonel Coppinger of the regular army. The

three younger children, Margaret, Harriet, and James, were growing up, healthy and happy, companions of their father as the elder children had been. But Margaret was at this time making the tour of Europe. The family was never complete without Miss Abby Dodge, "Gail Hamilton," who made her home with the Blaines in Washington every winter, from the early days of Mr. Blaine's speakership until his death. Her brilliant and sparkling wit, that dropped from her tongue as felicitously as it flowed from her pen, made her one of the most attractive personages in the social life of Washington. She was always a helpful entertainer at the table and in the drawing-room of Mrs. Blaine, her own cousin, and was the dauntless champion of Mr. Blaine. In the summer, when the Washington house was closed, the family, the secretaries, and servants returned to the old homestead at Augusta, where they led a joyous country life, and Miss Dodge went to her own home in Hamilton, Massachusetts.

As the time for president-making drew near, the leaders of the three sections of the Republican party began laying their plans. Mr. Arthur had made a safe President. Unlike the two earlier vice-presidents who had succeeded to the position on the death of the elected President, he had not betrayed his party. His policy was al-

ways cautious, and his administration was not marked by any great measure, any stirring political contest, or any grave scandal. Consequently he was a far more formidable candidate for the nomination than seemed probable at the beginning of his service as President. The "third section," the independents, represented roughly by those who opposed General Grant in 1872, who supported Bristow in 1876, and who were against both Grant and Blaine in 1880, were not now seriously hostile to Arthur, but they eventually concentrated their forces in favor of Senator Edmunds of Vermont.

What were the members of the "first section" to do, — those who had supported Blaine in two conventions? Mr. Blaine himself made no secret of his opinion that the administration wasted large opportunities, and that in its foreign policy it was weak and nerveless. But he followed his invariable practice and said nothing to encourage the idea that he desired again to be a candidate before the convention. Indeed, as the time for the meeting of the convention drew near, he became positively disinclined to have his name used.

In the winter of 1883–84 there was a notable gathering in New York of friends and supporters of Blaine, — Whitelaw Reid, William Walter Phelps, Charles Emory Smith, and others. The

expediency of starting a movement in favor of Mr. Blaine was warmly discussed, — not as to the movement itself but as to the appropriate time for it. Mr. Smith finally declared to those who were present that, whatever they might decide, he intended to go home and place the name of Mr. Blaine as a candidate for the presidency at the head of the columns of the Philadelphia *Press* at once. He did so. The movement was started, and the idea was quickly taken up with enthusiasm in every part of the country where the Republicans hoped for success at the polls.

To the period of the preliminary canvass belongs the story of a personal reconciliation between General Grant and Mr. Blaine. Reference has been made already to the fact that relations between them were broken off some time before. Mr. Blaine's own feelings were expressed by him in a letter to Mr. Elkins in November, 1881. Having asked Mr. Elkins to disabuse the mind of another person as to his, Blaine's, agency in procuring the publication of a certain newspaper article, he added, "I do not care to make the slightest correction in General Grant's mind, for he is in the habit of speaking of me in a manner that renders me entirely careless of what he may think." In 1883 some of the friends of both men undertook to

restore the friendship between them. With reference to this effort Mr. Blaine wrote to Mr. Elkins: "I note what you say in regard to General Grant. Do not in any talk put me in the attitude of soliciting or actively desiring any reconciliation with him. He broke with me, not I with him. You see I cannot ask Grant to forgive me for what he alone has done. But, as you well know, I have no malice or grudge against him, never injured him in word or act, never said a thing against him that I would not say to him; have never spoken an abusive nor disrespectful word of him. I have therefore nothing to explain, nothing to retract, nothing to apologize for. My difference with him was on a public issue on which I had a right to my own course. I leave it all to you." A month later, August 20, he wrote another letter to Elkins, who had evidently reported to him the progress of the negotiation. He expressed himself as "deeply interested in your letter." "You will always find it difficult to reconcile a difference that is all on one side. I never gave General Grant the slightest cause of personal offence, but he assumed that I did, and it is easier to remove ten facts than one assumption. . . . My dignity and self respect are as safe in your hands as in mine, and that is the only point I wish guarded."

It is pleasant to learn that the effort to bring

about personal harmony was successful. When calamity overtook the general in the following year, Mr. Blaine wrote again to his friend Elkins, "I am profoundly sorry for the Grant disaster, for disaster it really is. It is a great shame that a man who has done so much for his country should be subjected to reverses so humiliating and to trials so embarrassing. Congress should relieve the General by putting him promptly on the retired list, with full pay of the rank from which he was taken sixteen years ago."

The proposition to make Mr. Blaine the Republican candidate for President, in 1884, found him in quite a different mood from that of 1876 and 1880. Perhaps he was not less ambitious of the great distinction than he had been, but the two defeats in convention had made him distrustful of himself in respect of his ability to be elected. He had serious doubts if any Republican could be successful. Moreover, he was fully aware of the opposition to himself on the part of a great many members of his own party. Apparently he was not so sure as he was in 1880 that he could make himself acceptable to the independents. A passage from his letter of December 10, 1880, to General Garfield, omitted from the quotation on page 234, is significant. Having assured the President elect that the independents "can be hitched to your administra-

tion with ease," he added, "I could handle them myself without trouble." Now he had doubts, which proved to be too well grounded. Nor, it seems, was he sure of the cordial support of the Grant section, and of the "machine" in New York and other states.

Nevertheless the movement in his favor gained impetus in almost every part of the country where the Republican party was strong. The surface indications were that the hostility to him within the party had greatly abated, at the same time that the enthusiasm over his candidacy had increased. Mr. Blaine began to say that he was afraid he should be nominated, and to those who showed surprise at such a statement he explained his reasons. Of course he made no public utterance to this effect, but to his family, who had unbounded faith in him and in his fortunes, and to his most intimate friends and associates, he was outspoken. Indeed, as he afterward confessed, he had all the time a presentiment that the canvass was to bring him disaster. But he could not, perhaps did not try, to persuade himself to forbid the use of his name; and if he had done so his friends would not have conformed to his wish.

But upon one point he was firm and unshaken. On the 8th of May, 1884, he wrote to Mr. Elkins, who was the volunteer campaign manager for

him, "My first, last, constant injunction is, spend no money. I never want it [the nomination] unless it be the unbought, unbiased will of the nominating power. *I enjoin this upon you with special emphasis.*" Again, on May 30, — the convention was to meet on June 3, — he wrote: "I wish to renew my request that you will not in any event, by direction or indirection, engage in the purchase of votes. I do not wish the nomination on any other basis than that which has made me a candidate, the unbiased, unbought judgment of the people. This is not merely a question of conscience and principle with me, but has become almost a superstition. Nomination procured by objectionable means would not merely be unwelcome to me, but would prove disastrous. I beg therefore that you will accept my judgment on this point as absolute and conclusive, irreversible, no matter what may be the degree of temptation or the specious justification which is suggested by the practice of our opponents."

It was doubtless the experience of 1880, when, as in the approaching canvass, two strong candidates not unequally matched divided between them a large majority of the delegates to the convention, that suggested to him that the event of 1880 might be repeated, and that a "dark horse" would win. At all events the attitude of his mind toward the candidacy which seemed

already more nearly certain than ever before, which led him on the 25th of May to write a remarkable letter to General Sherman, is most difficult to describe in words. The letter itself was marked "Confidential. Strictly and absolutely so." General Sherman himself published it in an article in the "North American Review" for December, 1888, with the remark that he did not violate confidence in doing so. It bears evidence in abundance that the writer intended it for the eye of General Sherman alone. It was as follows: —

My dear General, — This letter requires no answer. After reading it carefully file it away in your most secret drawer, or give it to the flames.[1]

At the approaching convention in Chicago it is more than possible — it is indeed not improbable — that you may be nominated for the presidency. If so you must stand your hand, accept the responsibility, and assume the duties of the place to which you will surely be chosen if a candidate. You must not look upon it as the work of the politicians. If it comes to you it will come as the ground-swell of popular demand — and you can no more refuse than you could have refused to obey an order when you were a lieu-

[1] "Burn this letter."

tenant in the army. If it comes to you at all it will come as a call of patriotism. It would, in such an event, injure your great fame as much to decline it as it would for you to seek it. Your historic record, full as it is, would be rendered still more glorious by such an administration as you would be able to give the country. Do not say a word in advance of the convention, no matter who may ask you. You are with your friends who will jealously guard your honor.

Do not answer this.

Nevertheless General Sherman did answer it in a most characteristic letter. He promised to construe the letter as absolutely confidential, even as regarded the members of his own family, but he combatted Mr. Blaine's position at every point. One sentence will show the vigor and emphasis with which he declined the career. "I owe no man a cent, have no expensive habits or tastes, envy no man his wealth or power, have no complications or indirect liabilities, and would account myself a fool, a madman, an ass, to embark anew, at sixty-five years of age, in a career that may at any moment become tempest-tossed by the perfidy, the defalcation, the dishonesty or neglect of any one of a hundred thousand subordinates utterly unknown to the

President of the United States, not to say the eternal worriment by a vast host of inpecunious friends and old military subordinates."

But our concern is with the question, what prompted Mr. Blaine to write the letter. It is certain that the idea that General Sherman might be nominated was in the minds of others at the time. General Henderson, on taking the chair as permanent president of the Republican national convention, referred to it openly. "And now, gentlemen," he said, in conclusion, "if because of personal disagreements among us, or the emergencies of the occasion, another name is sought, there yet remains that grand old hero of Kenesaw Mountain and Atlanta." The simplest answer to the question as to Mr. Blaine's motive is the true one. On every account he approved the selection of General Sherman as the candidate. Sherman was his close personal friend, a wise man who would make a good President, and "available" to an extreme degree. Blaine himself had serious misgivings as to his own ability to be elected if nominated, looked with something of dread on the prospect of a canvass wherein he was to be the leader, and was even at that time prescribing the conditions upon which alone he would consent to accept the leadership. It cannot be doubted that he would have welcomed the nomi-

nation of General Sherman as a relief from a situation almost as repellent as it was attractive, a position in the forefront of the battle, most honorable in itself, yet involving exposure to all the missiles of the enemy.

Mr. Blaine's misgivings were only too well justified, although neither he nor any one else could have foreseen the character and the power of the several influences that combined to defeat him. There were few indications before the convention, and almost no open threats, of a revolt within the party if he should be the candidate, — that is to say, no threats by persons usually credited with much influence in political affairs. An examination of the official verbatim report of the proceedings justifies the statement that not one word was uttered during the sessions of the convention that implied hostility to Mr. Blaine, or in derogation of his character, or premonitory of a bolt if he should be nominated.

The convention met at Chicago on the 3d of June. At the outset there was a contest over the choice of a temporary presiding officer. Mr. Blaine's friends ranged themselves generally on one side and those of all the other candidates on the other side; and although the vote was not strictly a test it was regarded as a rough indication of what might be expected when the first vote for a candidate was taken. The nominee

supported by the Blaine contingent was defeated by a majority of only forty.

No unusual incident marked the proceedings. The report of the committee on credentials was accepted unanimously without debate, and the platform also was adopted with equal unanimity. The several candidates for the nomination were proposed in eloquent speeches, and the nominations were seconded in speeches admirable in temper. There was the usual noisy and prolonged enthusiasm on the part of the friends of the candidates as their names were uttered. Naturally the demonstration was most obstreperous when the name of Mr. Blaine was pronounced by the blind orator of Ohio, Judge William H. West, but Mr. Arthur, Senator Edmunds, General Logan, John Sherman, and General Hawley had many ardent advocates and were vigorously applauded by delegates who did not intend to vote for them. The roll was called four times. On the first trial Mr. Blaine had 334½ votes of the 411 necessary to nominate him. He had some votes from all but five of the States and from five of the nine territories. Four of the states that cast no votes for him were New England States, and a fifth, Massachusetts, afforded him but a solitary supporter. The Blaine vote increased to 349 on the second roll-call, to 375 on the third, and to 541 on the fourth, when he had 130 more than

were necessary for a nomination. Even on this conclusive roll-call Connecticut continued to vote for Hawley, and Vermont and a majority of the Massachusetts delegates for Edmunds. Outside of Maine Mr. Blaine had only thirteen New England votes, and there were fifty-one votes from the five states against him.

A scene of almost unexampled enthusiasm ensued upon the announcement of Mr. Blaine's nomination, and a motion to make the choice unanimous was carried, amid renewed cheering, no one objecting. Yet there was a group of men in the convention who did not accept the result cheerfully if they accepted it at all. They were not ready to bolt at once. They had not decided what course they would pursue. In the end most of them gave a more or less active support to the ticket, but some of the delegates, after reflecting upon the matter, joined in the revolt which constituted one of the chief features of the canvass that ensued.

Mr. Blaine had retired to his Augusta home before the convention, and there received intelligence of the proceedings. His neighbors, all his friends, were excited and enthusiastic over the result. A special train was made up at Bangor and quickly crowded with men, who journeyed to Augusta to congratulate the candidate in person. The California delegation in the con-

vention, one and all his supporters at every roll-call, did better, for they travelled the whole distance from Chicago to Augusta, nearly fifteen hundred miles, for the same purpose. From one end of the country to the other Republicans and Republican newspapers expressed the liveliest satisfaction that the choice had fallen upon a real political leader whom they had learned to love for his personal traits and to admire for his brilliant and dashing qualities as a public man. "Like a plumed knight," a phrase employed by Robert G. Ingersoll in presenting his name to the convention of 1876, suggested a party emblem for the campaign, which was used by friends and foes, for the cartoonists of the opposition delighted to make the plumed helmet a means of ridicule. But the rank and file of the Republican party were proud of their candidate, and manifested their devotion to him and their confidence in him in ways that showed that he had a stronger hold upon their affection than any former candidate of the party could boast.

The campaign was opened in the usual way. Blaine clubs were organized, ratification meetings were held, and an aggressive canvass was planned. A committee of the convention designated for the purpose, with General Henderson, the president of the convention, at its head, visited Augusta and communicated verbally to the can-

didate the fact of his nomination, and listened to a brief response by Mr. Blaine, expressing his sense of the honor conferred upon him, and accepting the nomination. This ceremony, which took place on the 21st of June, was followed three weeks later by a formal letter of acceptance. By far the largest consideration was given in this paper to the question of the tariff, to the increase of trade and wealth under the protective system, to the importance to the farmer of a home market for his produce, and to the benefit which labor derived from a policy which enabled employers to pay good wages. A strong plea was made for the cultivation of more intimate relations with the countries of the Western Hemisphere, as well as for the promotion of measures to ensure peace between them by means of arbitration. Two or three hopeful paragraphs dealt with the Southern question: the rapidly disappearing mutual antagonism between North and South; the prospect of industrial development in the Southern States; the hostility to Southern prosperity which was chargeable upon the Democratic party in its "effort to unite the Southern States upon issues that grow out of memories of the war."

Mr. Blaine was emphatic in his commendation of measures to take the civil service out of politics. "Impartiality in the mode of appointment to be based on qualification, and security of

tenure to be based on faithful discharge of duty, are the two ends to be accomplished." He asserted that he had always favored both these objects, and made a special point that consuls of the United States, who "should be commercial sentinels, encircling the globe with watchfulness for their country's interests," should be chosen upon this system. A word against polygamy; an expression in favor of bimetallism, upon a basis of relative values of gold and silver to be fixed by international agreement; a brief argument in favor of a liberal policy in respect of the public land; an approval of every measure calculated to restore the ocean-carrying trade: and a vigorous assertion of the importance of honest elections, brought the letter of acceptance to a close. It is a terse and powerful setting forth of the principles then and always held by the Republican party, put in such a way as to show that the writer, now the leader of that party, was ready to take an advanced position in every effort to carry those principles into effect.

Meantime an opposition to Mr. Blaine of an extraordinary character was in process of organization. Some influential Republican newspapers, some most respected and honorable men, lifelong members of the party, declared publicly, with unfeigned reluctance, that they could not and would not support the ticket, if Governor

Cleveland, of New York, in whom they had confidence, should be the nominee of the Democratic party. Their hope was realized early in July, and from that time they worked with energy and zeal to defeat Blaine and to elect Cleveland.

The basis of their action was a contention that Mr. Blaine was an unfit person to be chosen President of the United States, or even to be tolerated in public life. They held that the accusations against him in connection with the Little Rock and Fort Smith transactions, as well as other charges affecting his personal integrity, were proved. They maintained also that his course when Secretary of State stamped him as an adventurous and unsafe statesman, who would surely embroil his country in a foreign war if he had the opportunity. In short, they condemned him as a man and as a public man.

The opposition born of this feeling existed, no doubt, in many parts of the country. It existed as an organized movement in a few of the eastern states only, it was strong nowhere save in Massachusetts, and the headquarters of the revolt was Boston. A Committee of One Hundred was constituted to undertake an active propaganda with the sole purpose of defeating Blaine in November. Pledges of opposition to him were circulated in Boston and the surrounding cities and received thousands of sig-

natures. Pamphlets were prepared, printed, and circulated in large numbers, in which the story of the "Mulligan letters" was told in a form to represent the case against Blaine in the most unfavorable light. Any one who had only these publications to guide him in forming an opinion would have been justified in regarding the Republican candidate as a person dishonest, untruthful, unfaithful to his friends, tricky, greedy of money, unscrupulous in private and public life, — in short a pretentious, worthless, and altogether detestable character.

It is not intended here to imply that all those who prepared and fathered these attacks upon Mr. Blaine were insincere or malicious. It is a charitable view, but one not easy to hold, that none of them allowed a feeling of personal antipathy to influence their judgment until they could see nothing honorable or admirable in him. Some of the "independent" newspapers in particular so abounded in sneer, innuendo, and vituperation, that it is difficult to ascribe their course wholly to a high sense of public duty. But in the main the leaders of the group of "Mugwumps," as they proudly styled themselves, were men of too high character and reputation to be actuated by other than public motives. There is no reason to think that they incited or approved the coarser assaults upon

Mr. Blaine, or that they entertained so mean an opinion of him as was professed by those who seem to have been — whether they were so or not — malignant. They were the "reformers by profession, the unco' good," as they were described by Mr. Blaine himself in the already twice quoted letter to Garfield, and men of the best intentions. It is a singular characteristic of those who constitute this class that they are much too ready to judge men of their own party by the worst their enemies say of them, too ready to overlook or to discredit accusations equally bad or worse brought against politicians of the other party with which they are temporarily in alliance.

The Mugwump leaders were themselves men of so high character that they carried with them in their political excursion a throng of other Republicans as capable, perhaps, as they of forming an opinion upon the matter in hand, but having too little independence to stand against the onrush of the leaders. It became the fashionable thing in and around Boston to be a Mugwump; and the former Republican, in the clubs and in certain social circles, who did not join in the movement was looked upon as morally obtuse if not completely lacking in moral principle.

Although the origin of the Mugwump movement is involved in no mystery, its persistence

requires explanation. It was primarily a revolt against the candidacy of one man, and was to end with the defeat of that man. Those who engaged in it professed that it was pride in their party and devotion to its principles that led them on to a course of action which they regarded as a defence of party and principles that would be imperilled were they entrusted to an unworthy leader. Their purpose was accomplished, yet few of those who were prominent in the movement returned to their old party allegiance. Many of them became permanently attached to the Democratic party, but many more have continued ever since to call themselves Mugwumps, still usually supporting Democratic candidates, but occasionally vindicating their profession of independence in politics by voting for a Republican. At the beginning of the revolt some of the more partisan of the Republican newspapers insisted that the movement was one in favor of free trade, and it is true that the most earnest and energetic Mugwumps were low-tariff men; but it would be grossly unjust to men of such character to suppose them capable of attempting to deceive by representing moral scruples to be the motive of acts to which they were really impelled merely by dislike of Mr. Blaine 's tariff views. It is nevertheless also true that the journalists and public men who then permanently withdrew from the

Republican party were and are, perhaps without an exception, free traders. Attachment to the fortunes of Mr. Cleveland, particularly after he took a position on the tariff question satisfactory to them, and increasing devotion to the protective principle on the part of the Republicans, form a sufficient explanation of their political course. By far the largest number of those who at first followed them returned long ago to the Republican party.

Besides the complication caused by the Mugwump movement there were two other important causes of uncertainty and insecurity in the Republican canvass. No one knew or could ascertain whether Mr. Conkling would use what influence he still possessed, to help or to hurt the ticket. Moreover General Benjamin F. Butler was a candidate for President, with nominations by the "anti-monopoly" party, and also by the National, or Greenback party. He had a large personal following, and was certain to draw many voters to his support. His political career in Massachusetts showed that he could attract voters of a certain class who were to be found in both parties and were a credit to neither. It was an interesting question which party would gain and which would lose, on the whole, by his continuing in the field as a candidate. Among many letters written by Mr. Blaine to Mr. Elkins in the

course of the campaign, is the following, dated July 27, in which the uncertainties in New York and the question about Butler are touched upon:

"Can Conkling be induced to speak for us? It would be an immense thing for us. How can he be induced to do it? What do you know about Johnny O'Brien and the rest of Arthur's friends? Are they playing fair? The Butler problem is difficult. It is difficult to tell what the gains and losses would be by his staying out or his going in. One course would hurt in some states and help in others, and *vice versa*. The whole problem is this, viz: if Butler runs he will get 250,000 votes, more or less, — less, probably. If he does not run who will get a majority of those votes? I think I would, and hence would gain by his staying out."

The importance of this expression of opinion aside from its guess as to the effect of the Butler candidacy, lies in the conclusive proof it affords that Butler's course was not regarded as helpful to Mr. Blaine, and that he did not, as his virulent enemies charged, promote the candidacy.

On the other hand the Republicans built not a little hope upon Mr. Blaine's popularity among voters of Irish blood. It was a popularity that was quite unsolicited, for he had always been opposed politically to the party to which most Irishmen attach themselves, he had never made

an appeal addressed to Irishmen in any state campaign he had conducted in Maine, and never until long afterward made speeches on the wrongs suffered by Ireland. To be sure he was of Irish descent on both sides of his house, but his ancestors came from the north of Ireland, and most of them were Presbyterians, as he himself was. Yet he was greatly admired by hosts of Irishmen; and Tammany Hall, in New York, was opposed to Mr. Cleveland and was brought over to his support late in the canvass. A great many Irishmen in New York State declared themselves in favor of Blaine.

At the Maine State election in September the Republican candidate received twenty thousand plurality, far more than the average during the long period of Republican ascendancy. But, contrary to the usual rule, the result could not be taken as an indication of the political situation in the country as a whole. It was merely a proof of the strong hold Mr. Blaine had upon the affection of the people of Maine. The Republican managers urgently advised their leader to make a speaking tour through the West. Ohio and West Virginia were the last states to abandon the practice of holding their state elections in October, and it was deemed good policy to play the best card in the hand of the party by sending Blaine into Ohio. With

some reluctance he acceded to the plan, and accordingly left Augusta on the 17th of September and did not return to his home until the day of the November election.

After a day or two in Boston, where he was magnificently received, and having delivered an address at Worcester, he proceeded to New York, where again, as well as in Philadelphia, to which he made a short visit, he was greeted by throngs of enthusiastic supporters. The brief stay in New York was made notable by his receiving a call from General Grant, with whom he had a pleasant interview that lasted more than an hour. When he left the city for his western tour his progress through New York State was a continuous ovation. At every stopping place there was a crowd of shouting men, and to each gathering Mr. Blaine made a short speech. Upon reaching Ohio, he began a stumping canvass differing from those in which he had previously participated only in the number and enthusiasm of those who listened to him. The topics upon which he addressed the voters were chiefly the tariff and the danger of a "solid South." He appreciated most keenly the extreme importance of the Ohio election, as numerous letters to Mr. Elkins, scrawled hastily on any scrap of paper that came to hand, abundantly prove. The National Committee was urged in

almost frantic language not to rely too much on him but to exert itself to the utmost to make sure of that one great state. He breathed more freely when Ohio gave its verdict, — a plurality of eleven thousand for the Republican candidate for Secretary of State, larger pluralities for the other state officers, and a gain of several Republican Congressmen.

Mr. Blaine had already given a few days of his time to West Virginia. On the 15th of October he began a brief campaign in Michigan, went from that state to Indiana for a week, passed into Illinois, and thence returned to New York City. He had been informed some time previous to his homeward journey that some most influential men, many of them possessors of great wealth, planned to give a banquet in his honor. Blaine's judgment was most decidedly against the scheme. In several letters he declared that it would be a great mistake for him to accede to the plan. He scented disaster. He believed that he ought by all means to avoid New York. He was right, but could not stand out against the urgency of his friends, and to New York he went. The banquet was highly successful, and the speeches made after it, to Blaine and by him, contained nothing to which the most critical could take exception. But the mere fact that he was so strongly supported by the repre-

sentatives of capital was used skilfully against him in appeals to those less favored by fortune, and no doubt worked to his injury.

But a still more untoward incident was to mark this visit to New York. On the 29th of October a large number of clergymen assembled to meet Mr. Blaine and assure him of their support. Their spokesman was the Rev. Mr. Burchard, who made a brief address which closed with these sentences: "We are Republicans, and don't propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion. We are loyal to our flag, we are loyal to you." Mr. Blaine apparently did not notice the alliterative clause, but it would have been difficult to rebuke the attempt to introduce a sectarian issue into the canvass, if he had been aware of it, without giving offence. His political adversaries at once took advantage of the unfortunate remark to detach from his support all whom they could persuade that the election of Blaine would be a blow at the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the most unscrupulous of his opponents represented the words as those of Blaine himself. It is said that leaflets ascribing the sentiment to him were distributed at the doors of Roman Catholic churches on the following Sunday. There is no doubt that the heedless remark

caused him the loss of more than enough votes to have changed the result in New York and thus to have elected him President.

Mr. Blaine stopped in Boston on his way home, and on the night before election reviewed an immense and enthusiastic procession of torch bearers. He arrived in Augusta in time to cast his own vote, and returned to his house to await the verdict of the people. Time and again, after his great canvass in the West closed, he was assured in the most confident manner that his election was certain. But he entertained doubts even then, and did not hesitate to express them to the friends about him.

The early returns from most of the states were favorable, but those from New York indicated a close vote. The electors of that state were not absolutely essential to Republican success. There were to be 401 electors, and 201 were necessary for a choice. The Democrats were sure of the 153 votes of the "solid South;" the Republicans could count upon all the Northern States except Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Indiana, and would thus have 182 votes. Mr. Blaine could win if he carried New York and its 36 electors, or with Indiana and either Connecticut or New Jersey. The news from New York was discouraging, and Mr. Blaine remarked to the friends assembled in his

library that if he had not at least five thousand plurality in New York he would be cheated out of the state. Weary with his long campaign and the strain of the election, he retired early, and slept soundly, leaving his secretary and his anxious friends to receive the later and more decisive returns. When he came down the next morning he received calmly the intelligence that he was probably defeated, and said to his friends that they were much less reconciled to the result than he was. He did not care half so much for himself, he assured them, as he did for the party that had suffered defeat under his leadership, and for the hosts of his friends who would be grievously disappointed.

Although all four of the "doubtful" Northern States gave their electoral votes to Mr. Cleveland, the result in all was unprecedentedly close. Indiana gave him a plurality of 6527 in a vote but 6000 short of half a million for all the candidates. In New Jersey Cleveland's plurality was 4358; in Connecticut, 1276; in New York, as the result was finally declared, 1149. In the four states Cleveland had 1,003,141 votes; Blaine, 989,831; and the Democratic plurality of 13,310, in a total for both candidates of almost two million, was but little more than a half of one per cent. New York was counted for Cleveland, but there were

then and are now few Republicans cognizant of the facts who doubt that a plurality of votes was actually cast in that state for Mr. Blaine. It was openly charged at the time, and commonly believed by Republicans, although Democrats warmly denied it, that in many precincts of New York City the votes for Butler were counted for Cleveland. The conviction, a few years later, of the unscrupulous boss of a town near New York, on a charge of falsifying election returns, confirmed in their opinion those who held the view that Blaine was really elected. But whether it was true or false that the returns were manipulated in the interest of the Democratic candidates, there was no way to prove the accusation, and all concerned acquiesced in the result as it was officially declared.

Mr. Blaine shared with three others the experience of missing the presidency by an extremely narrow margin. Burr was tied with Jefferson in the electoral vote of 1801. Clay lost the vote of New York and the election, in 1844, by a small plurality, owing to the defection of the Free Soilers. Tilden's claim to the office was defeated in 1877 by the judgment of the Electoral Commission, but even then a single additional electoral vote would have given him a majority.

"The whole campaign," wrote Blaine to one of his most intimate friends, a month or two

after the election, "was a disaster to me — personally, politically, and pecuniarily. I ought to have obeyed what was really my strong instinct against running. My regrets do not in the least take the form of mourning over defeat in the election, but over my blunder in ever consenting to run. It was the wrong year — and gave to my enemies their coveted opportunity." Once in the campaign, Mr. Blaine had bent all his energies and had given all his time and large contributions in money to the cause. His correspondence at this time deals much with money matters and with arrangements to enable him to tide over a temporary embarrassment until he could recover himself. In one letter he remarks upon the reputation his political enemies had given him of being exceedingly wealthy, and of the contrast his actual situation formed with that reputation.

Many causes combined to bring about Blaine's defeat, which was so narrow that but for any one of them he would have been chosen President. The Mugwump defection was of course the chief cause, for in so great a state as New York, where some of the most intense opposition of this sort found expression in influential publications, there must have been many times enough Republicans who voted for Cleveland to have given Blaine the electoral vote of the

state. The Prohibition vote may also be mentioned, but that is a feature of every election, and except that a certain number of Republicans who could not bring themselves to vote the Democratic ticket cast their ballots for St. John, the fact that this particular independent ticket was in the field had no appreciable effect upon the result. In all probability Mr. Blaine was right, in a letter already quoted, in the opinion that the candidacy of Butler drew more votes from him than from his opponent. It did, according to affidavits made at the time, enable the Tammany managers to count for Cleveland ballots actually given to Butler. How many votes were so counted could not be ascertained, but, with a large supply to draw upon, a number exceeding the official plurality of Cleveland is not a high estimate. Again, the success of the "rum, Romanism, and rebellion" phrase in turning Irishmen away from Mr. Blaine was obvious at once, and might surely be credited with turning victory into defeat, were all the other causes of the result to be eliminated.[1] Finally, the cool and non-committal

[1] Mr. Blaine himself referred to the causes of his defeat in a letter to Mr. Murat Halstead, dated November 16, 1884, in which he makes an amusing reference to the Burchard incident. Mr. Halstead published a facsimile of the letter in an article in *McClure's Magazine* for January, 1896. "I feel quite serene over the result," he wrote. "As the Lord sent upon us an Ass in the shape of a Preacher and a rain-

attitude of Mr. Conkling, although without effect upon a vast majority of Republicans in New York, must have been taken by the most ardent partisans of that gentleman as an indication that his apparent indifference masked a secret wish for the defeat of his old antagonist. An "interview," published in December, 1884, represented Mr. Blaine as having ascribed his defeat to Conkling; but aside from the fact that an "interview" in a newspaper, particularly an interview with Blaine, needs authentication to entitle it to belief, we have seen that he attributed the loss of New York to Mr. Burchard's indiscretion and to the weather. The concluding remark in the interview may nevertheless have been spoken, since Blaine practically said the same thing on other occasions: "My election was not to be;" and there we may leave it.

storm to lessen our vote in New York, I am disposed to feel resigned to the dispensation of defeat which flowed directly from those agencies.

"In missing a great honor I escaped a great and oppressive responsibility.

"You know — perhaps better than any one — *how much* I *did n't want* the nomination — but perhaps in view of all things I have not made a loss by the canvass. At least I try to think not — the other candidate would have fared hard in Maine, and would have been utterly broken in Ohio."

X

AGAIN SECRETARY OF STATE

THERE was consolation in defeat. Friends and intimate associates poured their grief into Mr. Blaine's ears. Disappointed supporters in all parts of the country in thousands of letters gave vent to their feeling of indignation at the treatment he had received, and at the vile aspersions upon his character. Eminent men in politics and in the professions — men of quite as keen perception and of quite as high moral tone as those who assailed him — wrote to assure him of their unwavering confidence in him. Even political opponents of high standing in their party, who knew the man and knew that the portrait of him drawn by his virulent enemies was not and could not be true, were among those who testified their personal respect and friendship.

Blaine lost no time in useless mourning over the result of the election, but turned again to the work which the canvass had interrupted. He resumed and finished the "Twenty Years of Congress," and then made a collection of his own speeches, articles, and diplomatic correspondence, under the title of "Political Discussions: Legis-

lative, Diplomatic and Popular," which was published in 1887. It is a fresh illustration of the extraordinary persecution to which he was subjected that some of the newspapers most violently opposed to him sent correspondents to Augusta to spy upon him, to collect gossip from slanderous tongues or to invent tales injurious to him and his family. For the detractors did not spare Mrs. Blaine nor the sons. Any one who is sufficiently curious to examine the files of the several New York papers for the issue of December 8, 1885, may find an illustration of the depth to which personal journalism can go. Undoubtedly such assaults, to which it is unnecessary to attach a descriptive adjective, wounded him deeply, but he gave no sign and left the truth to right him in due time.

One of the ways in which the representatives of hostile papers had discerned, long before, that they were capable of causing Mr. Blaine extreme annoyance, was by representing him as breaking down or as already broken down in health. They had found the most characteristic weakness in his make-up. From early manhood he was, in respect of his own health, "notional." Upon the slightest indisposition he took to his bed and summoned a physician. He was apprehensive to an equal degree when any member of his family was ill. It gave a dash to his spirits whenever any

one suggested that he was not looking well. His intimates did not have many opportunities to amuse themselves at his expense, but they did quietly tell among themselves stories to illustrate his possession of at least one very human weakness. On his great tour of the West in the campaign of 1884 a cinder got in his eye on a railway trip in Ohio. The eye pained him, probably not more than is usually the case, and as he walked the floor at his hotel, he called to one of his companions and directed him to make plans for an immediate return home. To Augusta? Yes, he was afraid he should lose the sight of that eye, and he must give up the rest of his stumping tour and put himself under the care of a skilful surgeon. There was a hasty consultation among those who were accompanying Mr. Blaine; local surgical aid was called in; expostulation against an abandonment of the campaign, and relief from pain, led him to change his mind; and the next day he delivered the political speech which was on his schedule of appointments.

Among the hundreds of newspaper clippings consulted in the preparation of this biography are a score or two scattered along in point of time from 1876 to the period when mortal illness had really attacked Mr. Blaine, in which he is represented as "a very sick man," as having lost his old-time physical vigor, as exhibiting an ominous

pallor of countenance, and in other phrases intimating or saying plainly that the end of his life could not be distant. Even the newspapers most given to personalities rarely show themselves so inconsiderate as to publish such statements about any man. It was cruelty to print them about Mr. Blaine, but that cruelty was persistent during many years.

Only two events in the life of Mr. Blaine, aside from his literary work, during almost three years after his defeat for the presidency, need even a passing reference. In 1886 he built for himself a summer residence at Bar Harbor, in a beautiful and commanding position on a hillside, and gave it the name of "Stanwood," doubly appropriate, because it was the maiden name of Mrs. Blaine, and because the house stood upon land long owned by a direct descendant of the first Stanwood in America, from whom Mrs. Blaine also was descended by a different branch.

In the same year he made a tour through Pennsylvania, and visited his birthplace and the other scenes of his early life. His reception at the several places he visited was extraordinarily enthusiastic, nowhere more so than at the college where he received his education, and where he was greeted as the most illustrious graduate of the institution.

In the summer of 1887 he sailed for Europe, accompanied by his wife and his unmarried daughters, and by Miss Dodge. His objects were rest and sightseeing, but incidentally he met many of the prominent men and women in the countries visited. It was also his purpose, as he made known in due time, to escape from the complications of the coming presidential canvass, for he had even then resolved not again to be a candidate for the nomination. He sailed from New York on the 20th of June, and reached London in time for the Queen's jubilee. He found an invitation awaiting him to be a guest at the Lord Mayor's dinner, and to a party the same evening at the Duchess of St. Albans's. "After the first half hour at the Duchess of St. Albans's party," wrote Mr. George W. Smalley, in an article in the New York "Tribune," after Mr. Blaine's death, "everybody wanted to know him. It rained introductions." He was invited, with his family, to the Queen's garden party, and had a long and interesting conversation with the Prince of Wales, now King Edward. It seems to have rained invitations as well as introductions. Mr. Smalley reports that Mr. Blaine declined an invitation to the Foreign Office, on the ground that he had, in his diplomatic correspondence, attacked the Marquis of Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary; that he also declined another invita-

tion from Lord Rosebery, for an unassigned reason; and that he expressed himself as unwilling to be presented to Lord Hartington, now the Duke of Devonshire. Such acts of discrimination among members of the highest social class in England show at least that he was no lion-hunter.

In July Mr. Blaine went to Scotland, to be the guest of Mr. Andrew Carnegie at Kilgrastow, a few miles from Perth. After a visit to Ireland, to the family of his son-in-law Colonel Coppinger, he crossed the Channel and went to Homburg, for the waters, thence to Vienna, Buda-Pesth, and Paris. In France again he received great social attention from public men. President Carnot, M. Tirard, the prime minister of the time, M. Floquet, Speaker of the House of Deputies, and others, sought his acquaintance and did him honor.

It was while he was in Paris that President Cleveland astonished the country and the world by sending to Congress his remarkable message on the tariff, in December, 1887. With that quick perception in political matters which always distinguished him, Mr. Blaine instantly saw his opportunity to speak a word that would close the breach in the Republican party and give it a rallying cry in the canvass soon to begin. Mr. Cleveland had summoned his own party to an

undertaking in accordance with its avowed principles, in which that party had been previously too timid to engage, because of the division in its own ranks. His message was a splendid exhibition of political courage, and it gave the Democrats an issue upon which to appeal to the country. But it gave an issue to the Repulicans also. Mr. Smalley, the London correspondent of the New York, "Tribune," called upon Mr. Blaine for an expression of his views on the message, a stenographer was called in, and an "interview" was dictated and cabled to New York.

Mr. Blaine spoke precisely the word that was needed to inspirit his party, and that formed the basis of the arguments which the Republicans, in the press and on the stump, amplified in the ensuing canvass. He maintained that the policy enunciated by Presdent Cleveland would sacrifice the control of the home market for an illusive opportunity to compete with other nations in foreign markets of less extent and value; that a large part of the loss would fall upon the farmers in consequence of the diminished prosperity of the industrial communities which gave them the best of their customers; that the South in particular needed protection; that, in fact, the farmers of the country, with their wool and other products, were all interested, both indirectly and directly, in the maintenance and extension of the

system. For the reduction of the unnecessarily large surplus he recommended the entire abolition of the tax on tobacco, as the poor man's luxury. He would maintain the duty on whiskey, partly for temperance reasons, but would devote the proceeds of that tax to the fortification and defence of the country.

It was at once denominated "Blaine's Paris Message," and it gave to his friends and supporters heart for the coming political contest. On all hands it was supposed that the man who had with a word rallied a party that had been thrown into momentary confusion by the startling message of the President, would again be the actual leader, as he had been in 1884. But, as has been said already, he had long before this time determined that he would not again permit his name to be used. In January, 1888, he wrote from Florence several letters to intimate friends and political associates announcing his decision. To Mr. Jones, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, he communicated it formally, saying that he was "constrained in this decision by considerations entirely personal to myself," and referring to the fact that he had mentioned to him these considerations a year previous. But to his closest friends he explained in more detail. In a letter to the Hon. Charles Emory Smith, dated January 26, having said

that his mind was made up, he added, "Indeed, ever since the last election I have felt that I would not run again unless I should be called upon by the practically unanimous judgment and wish of the party. I did not expect to receive that unanimity and therefore feel no disappointment that other candidates are in the field. Should I permit my name to go into the convention I would certainly meet Sherman from Ohio, Harrison from Indiana, and Hawley from Connecticut. Now, Indiana and Connecticut are two of the States which we must have to succeed. I would not run again except upon a cordial unanimous demand of those States." Having mentioned other probable candidates, he said, "I do not doubt that I could be nominated, and if I had not been defeated in 1884 I would undoubtedly go into the convention, but having had my chance and lost I do not wish to appear as a claimant with the demand 'Try me again.'"

Such letters, written to intimate friends who were devoted to his fortunes, and there were many such letters, would have put a stop to the "boom" for any other candidate than Blaine. But curiously enough those enemies of the man who fancied that he could never say what he meant, nor mean what he said, took the ground that the letters were "a bid for the nomination" instead of a refusal of it; and many of his most

earnest friends unwittingly gave support to this remarkable theory by refusing to accept his decision. They saw in his letters an apparent willingness to stand again if the wish for his nomination should be practically unanimous, and undertook to secure unanimity. Their expectation undoubtedly was that, in a contest where so many candidates were to appear, no one of them could obtain a majority, and that at the last the desired unanimity would be obtained. That, however, was not at all Mr. Blaine's idea. He meant what he said. At no moment until the convention had made a choice did he swerve in the slightest degree from his original purpose. It was not the unanimity on a "dark horse" that he required to change his mind, but original unanimity; and that he knew he could not have. In many forms and to many friends he repeated and reiterated that his purpose was unchangeable, and that events since his first letter to Mr. Jones made it even a matter of honor not to retract, nor to suffer his name to be used. The strongest and most emphatic expression of this idea was conveyed in a letter to the Hon. Whitelaw Reid, dated May 17, 1888.

"If," he wrote, "I should now, by speech or by silence, by commission or omission, permit my name in any event to come before the convention, I should incur the reproach of being uncandid

with those who have always been candid with me. . . . I am not willing to be the cause of misleading a single man among the millions who have given me their suffrage and their confidence. I am not willing that even one of my faithful supporters in the past should think me capable of paltering in a double sense with my words. Assuming that the presidential nomination could by any possible chance be offered to me, I could not accept it without leaving in the minds of thousands of these men the impression that I had not been free from indirection, and therefore I could not accept it at all. The misrepresentations of malice have no weight, but the just displeasure of my friends I could not patiently endure."

Even this explicit declaration did not satisfy some of Blaine's too devoted friends. The most of those who were nearest to him by intimate association and long friendship did accept it and refrained from attempts to bring about his nomination. Yet it may be questioned if they did not still cherish a vague hope that without activity on their part events would turn out so that an irresistible call to him to be the candidate would break down his opposition.[1] The

[1] An amusing account is given, in a letter from William Walter Phelps to Mr. Elkins, of the manner in which some of Blaine's friends considered the question of the nomina-

pressure upon him continued, and the attempts to stampede the convention were persisted in to the very last, in spite of his protests. In a despatch from Scotland to two of his closest political

tion before the convention met. It would be improper to print the names of the persons discussed as candidates or those of the persons who made the comments reported by Mr. Phelps; but with such suppression the important part of the letter is as follows: —

"You ought to have been at the Friday night conference. The others were all there and we talked many hours. There were most interesting scenes, for it became a question as to which should take the palm for distributing the plainest truths among his friends.

"—— was ruled out, because he admitted he had been a Know-nothing; only —— averse.

"—— was ruled out, because he could n't be elected; no one opposing.

"——, after such talks! about ruled out, final ruling out left for Friday night of this week, when we meet again. —— [the same person] willing to be ruled out last Friday, but not unwilling to wait and see what he would see for himself West, where he is to-day. He was ruled out, or is to be, simply because Kansas, Michigan, and Iowa won't vote for any Granger.

"When we parted it was Harrison or ——; —— stronger for ——, —— stronger for Harrison.

"The only ill-feeling was on ——'s demand for —— for Vice President. —— was bitter. It would weaken the ticket; it would be greeted with laughter, etc. So that was postponed — and all questions of Vice Pres't.

"There, that is the summary of last Friday. But the details were rich. I knew they would be, and was sorry when Reid handed me your card that you were off."

friends in the Maine delegation he earnestly besought them to respect his wishes, and he sent a second despatch on the same day in which he reiterated the request in language almost of reproach that the repeated demands were unheeded. Although Blaine had often privately expressed the opinion that General Harrison was the best and strongest candidate, he did not until the last moment indicate formally his wish that that gentleman should be chosen. A code had been agreed upon between his friends in the United States and himself, and when a deadlock or a long contest seemed inevitable, the following despatch was sent from Mr. Carnegie's estate in Scotland, where Blaine was staying, to a prominent Republican leader: —

June 25. Too late victor immovable take trump and star. WHIP.

Two roll-calls in the convention on Friday, June 22, and three on Saturday, had resulted in no choice. On every trial John Sherman, of Ohio, was the leader. The above despatch was sent on Monday and received before the Convention assembled. Interpreted, it reads: —

Too late. Blaine immovable. Take Harrison and Phelps. CARNEGIE.

The Blaine forces were turned to the support of General Harrison, and he was nominated. Mr. Blaine's advice to nominate William Walter Phelps for Vice-President was not followed. The convention chose Mr. Levi P. Morton for the place.

An incident of Mr. Blaine's stay at Mr. Carnegie's castle, narrated by Mr. T. C. Crawford, will illustrate the character of the espionage to which he was subjected during most of his European tour. Mr. Crawford — a journalist who was in many ways associated with Mr. Blaine, and who has written a biography of him which the present writer has found useful — says that when Blaine was on the continent a reporter for a New York newspaper dogged his footsteps, waylaid servants and questioned them, and carried his system of personal annoyance to such a degree that Blaine was forced to take measures even to protect his private correspondence from being violated. This man followed Blaine to Scotland, and on one occasion disguised himself as a servant, secured Blaine's mail from the postman, opened his letters and read them, and left them on the ground.

After the nomination there was no need of further persecution, and the last weeks of the stay in Europe were free from annoyance. The family party sailed for home in August, after an

absence from America of more than a year. Hosts of friends met him in New York on the arrival of the steamship, and gave him a royal welcome. He entered at once into the campaign, was in demand in every State, spoke to vast throngs of people, and contributed greatly to the success of the Republican candidates.

Immediately upon receiving news of General Harrison's nomination, Mr. Blaine had sent to the new Republican "standard-bearer" a despatch of congratulation, as he had done to Hayes in 1876 and to Garfield in 1880. General Harrison, in acknowledging it, referred to it as "so prompt, so generous, and so stirring;" and he also practically recognized Blaine's own agency in bringing about the nomination. "From your most intimate and trusted friends I had the assurance that in a possible contingency you and they might regard my nomination with favor. It was only such assurances that made my Indiana friends hopeful of success, and only the help of friends made success possible." In a letter written on the eve of Mr. Blaine's return to this country, he again gave expression to his cordial sentiments. No doubt he appreciated and was grateful for the efficient service of Blaine on the stump.

Public opinion of every shade took it for granted that the President-elect would offer to him the

position of Secretary of State. No intimation has ever been made, publicly at least, that General Harrison considered any other person for the chief portfolio in his cabinet. Nevertheless it was not until the 17th of January, 1889, more than two months after the election, that the offer of the portfolio was made. Many of Blaine's friends, possibly he himself, thought the delay strange, and suspected that it portended the choice of another person as Secretary. There was probably no reason for such a suspicion. The tender of the cabinet position was not so prompt as it had been when Garfield made the offer, but it was made in most cordial terms. The difference in temperament between the two Presidents, and the fact of a friendly intimacy between Garfield and Blaine, which had never existed to so great a degree between Harrison and Blaine, furnish a sufficient explanation of the two months' delay, if any explanation be needed.

A personal note accompanied the formal offer of the State Department. General Harrison expressed himself as "especially interested in the improvement of our relations with the Central and South American States." He remarked that three distinct questions with three several European powers called for "early and discreet attention." He also expressed his desire to con-

duct affairs so as "to preserve harmony in our party," and was "very solicitous to avoid anything that would promote dissensions, and very desirous that the civil service shall be placed and conducted on that high plane which will recommend our party to the confidence of all the people."

Mr. Blaine replied on January 21, accepting the office, and reciprocating in the fullest measure "the cordiality and confidence which mark every line of it" [the letter]. He was "in heartiest accord with the principles and policies which you briefly outline for your administration," and was "especially pleased with what you say in regard to foreign affairs." His expression of loyalty to his new chief was not put in the same terms as those in which he effaced himself to serve General Garfield, but it was equally significant. "In becoming a member of your cabinet I can have no motive, near or remote, inconsistent with the greatest strength and highest interests of your administration, and of yourself as its personal and official head."

So Mr. Blaine became Secretary of State a second time, and reëntered the public service after an interval of a little more than seven years. He took up duties much more congenial than those of the higher office in which the people had failed to place him. He had reached the

age of fifty-eight years and was at a period of life when a man of such robust constitution as he enjoyed should be at the height of physical as well as of mental power. But the last twelve of those years had been passed, either in strife with those who were determined to break him down, or in silent endurance of attacks which he was too proud to resent. Hard work and the mental strain and distress caused by the unrelenting opposition he encountered had to a certain extent undermined his health. But his opportunity had come — the opportunity interrupted by the death of Garfield — to delight his friends and to confound his enemies, by a brilliant conduct of foreign affairs. As before, his two watchwords were peace and a firm assertion of American rights.

He entered promptly upon the work before him. Most of the questions with which he had to deal were inherited from the preceding administration. Upon the whole, savagely as his treatment of those matters has been criticised, his course was not markedly different from that of Mr. Bayard. He reversed nothing that his predecessor had done. If he was more urgent, more positive, more pungent in his correspondence than Mr. Bayard, it was because he was more forceful in speech, in acts, in temperament generally. The first matter to receive particular

attention was the situation in Samoa. The German government took an irritating attitude, for it put forth a claim to paramount influence on the ground of superior financial and commercial interests in the Samoan group of islands; and fostered a revolution and the deposition of the recognized king. Mr. Blaine insisted upon the equality of the three powers which had established the governmental status of the islands, — Great Britain, the German Empire, and the United States. The correspondence was voluminous, but in the end Mr. Blaine carried every point on which he insisted. There was a resumption of the conference between the three powers, at Berlin, and a treaty was made under the terms of which a chief justice of the islands was appointed by the sovereign of a neutral and disinterested power, the king of Sweden and Norway. With the subsequent events — the attempt of the pretender Mataafa to seize the throne, the despatch of a warship of the United States to Apia to assist in enforcing the provisions of the treaty, which President Cleveland declared[1] " signally illustrate the impolicy of entangling alliances with foreign powers," and the partition of Samoa between Germany and the United States — with these matters we have nothing to do.

On May 24, 1888, President Cleveland ap-

[1] Annual Message, December 4, 1893.

proved a resolution of Congress authorizing and requesting the President to invite the independent powers of the two American continents, and Haiti and Santo Domingo, to send delegates to a conference to be held in Washington, substantially for the purposes mentioned in the invitation issued in 1881 by Mr. Blaine in the name of President Arthur. It could not have been anticipated that the whirligig of politics would restore to the originator of the measure the duty of carrying it into execution. But the invitations were transmitted, were accepted by all the governments to which they were addressed, and when the delegates met at Washington on the 2d of October, 1889, it was James G. Blaine who welcomed them to the country, and, in a speech eloquent and noble in its sentiments, set before them the duties they were undertaking and the spirit in which those duties were to be performed. He may be said to have summed it all up in the following passage, in which he characterized the assembly: "an honorable, peaceful conference of seventeen independent American powers, in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality; a conference in which there can be no attempt to coerce a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; a conference which will permit no secret understanding on

any subject, but will frankly publish to the world all its conclusions; a conference which will tolerate no spirit of conquest, but will aim to cultivate an American sympathy as broad as both continents; a conference which will form no selfish alliance against the older nations from which we are proud to claim inheritance, — a conference, in fine, which will seek nothing, propose nothing, endure nothing that is not, in the general sense of all the delegates, timely, wise, and peaceful."

Mr. Blaine was chosen president of the conference, which held seventy sessions and did not complete its labors until the middle of April, 1890. Some measures of great importance were decided upon; upon others an agreement could not be reached. But no one can read the debates in the conference without being impressed by the conciliatory attitude of all the delegates, and in particular by the friendliness displayed toward the United States. Mr. Blaine was fully justified in saying, in his speech just before declaring the conference at an end: "If, in this closing hour, the conference had but one deed to celebrate, we should dare to call the world's attention to the deliberate, confident, solemn dedication of two great continents to peace and to the prosperity which has peace for its foundation. We hold up this new *magna charta* which abol-

ishes war and substitutes arbitration between the American republics, as the first and great fruit of the International American Conference."

Optimism is required on such an occasion. Probably Mr. Blaine did not feel great confidence that war between the American republics had been abolished, save in theory. There is no doubt whatever that the conference has ever since been influential in the direction of peace, nor that wars have been less frequent among the Spanish American nations in the last fifteen years than formerly. Nevertheless, only nine weeks after the conference adjourned finally there was a revolution in Salvador; Guatemala refused to recognize the new Salvadorean government and began hostilities against it; and there was a brief but bloody war. The government of Guatemala trespassed upon the rights of the United States by seizing arms from the Pacific mail steamship Colima, and by intercepting telegrams addressed to the United States minister to Central America. General Ezeta, commanding the forces of Salvador, attacked the United States consulate in the city of San Salvador, tore down the flag, and damaged the property. The correspondence relative to these outrages and to reparation and apology for them, was quite different in tone from the gentle, peaceful and reciprocally complimentary language

used in the conference. Moreover, the positive refusal of the authorities of Salvador for a long time to accept the good offices of the United States in reëstablishing peace with Guatemala, was anything but a confirmation of the hopeful assurance by Mr. Blaine, a few months before, that arbitration was thenceforth to settle all national differences on these continents. But human nature, and particularly Spanish-American nature, cannot be made peaceable by treaty.

The next year, 1891, there was another occurrence, this time in the city of Valparaiso, grossly injurious to the United States, almost humorously inconsistent with the sentiments expressed at Washington in 1890. There was a revolution in Chile, also. The minister to that country was Mr. Patrick Egan, a great friend and ardent supporter of Mr. Blaine, but most obnoxious to Englishmen on account of his connection with Irish revolutionary movements. The particular enemies of Mr. Blaine pronounced the appointment of Egan scandalous, and lost no opportunity to throw discredit upon his conduct in the extremely difficult situation in which he was placed. Nevertheless, his course seems to have been correct and discreet, and he refuted successfully all the charges brought against him.

Before the Chilean revolution was accomplished, Mr. Egan properly maintained good re-

lations with the existing government. When the revolutionists obtained possession of Valparaiso some of the defeated government officials took refuge in the American legation, and Mr. Egan gave them asylum, as it was his duty to do. But this course was offensive to the revolutionary leaders, and to their supporters in Valparaiso. The United States cruiser Baltimore, under the command of Captain Winfield S. Schley, visited the port at this time, and one evening when about one hundred and fifty men of the war vessel were on shore leave, a slight affray in a drinking saloon between an American sailor and a Chilean led to the gathering of a mob of about five thousand Chileans, who attacked the Americans. One sailor of the Baltimore was killed, — by a policeman according to the statement of some of his fellows, — and many were injured. It would require pages to narrate in detail the delays, the denials, the obstacles thrown in the way of investigation, the haughty insolence of the provisional minister of foreign relations, of the intendente of Valparaiso, and of the judge of the criminal court. The climax was reached in a despatch from the foreign minister to Señor Montt, the Chilean minister in Washington, in which he declared that the statements in the message of the President and in the report of the Secretary of the Navy were either "errone-

ous or deliberately incorrect," and that "moreover there is neither exactness nor sincerity in what is said at Washington." No satisfaction of any sort could be obtained from the provisional government; but after an election had been held a new administration was inaugurated, by which ample apologies were made and the insulting references to the President and the Secretary of the Navy were frankly withdrawn. The affair itself, rather than the diplomatic correspondence, is interesting. The situation called for firmness and peremptoriness, but not for the exercise of any unusual intellectual force. In the end the Secretary of State gained his point without even the most distant suggestion of coercion to secure it. To that extent this government observed the humane rules adopted by the conference, if Chile did not.

To return from these digressions, the conference of 1889–90 was far from fruitless. From it came directly the establishment of the Bureau of American Republics, which has done much in a quiet way to promote commercial relations between the several countries. It has not made them all friends, each to all the rest, nor has it dissipated wholly a certain cloud of vague suspicion that arises from time to time, in this country and that, as to the ultimate purposes of the United States. But it will hardly be denied that

it has to an appreciable extent ameliorated conditions. The settlement of two or three boundary disputes of long standing between South American governments, in particular that between Chile and the Argentine Republic, and the agreement, which has been carried out, to dispose of their navies, may be attributed almost directly to the conference. But even if the conference had resulted in nothing save peaceful professions, meaning nothing in the minds of those who uttered them, the purpose of Mr. Blaine in originating the movement, and his agency in conducting it, can have nothing but the heartiest praise from every lover of peace. To no one in this country can be attributed more earnest, zealous, and prolonged effort in the cause of international arbitration.

One of the most important matters that engaged Mr. Blaine's attention during his incumbency of the State department was the question of the seal fishery in the Bering Sea, — a subject of extraordinary difficulty. Prior to the cession of Alaska to the United States Russia enjoyed, unmolested and unquestioned, a monopoly of that industry. When the peninsula and the outlying islands were acquired by the United States, in 1867, a monopoly was granted to the Alaska Commercial Company in consideration of a yearly rental, and a fixed sum for each seal

killed, upon certain stringent conditions. Male seals only were to be killed, on the Pribilof Islands only, and not to exceed a certain number annually, which was eventually fixed at one hundred thousand. Pelagic sealing, that is, killing seals in the open ocean, was absolutely prohibited, as was also the slaughter of females. The company undertook to provide the islanders employed in the killing with food, medical attendance, and other necessaries. Under the regulations established, which were strictly enforced, the seal herd increased and the business promised to be permanent. Almost all the skins were sent to England to be dressed, so that the people of that country had an interest in the maintenance of the herd, the last of many, all of which in both oceans, south as well as north of the equator, had been exterminated by reckless and unrestrained pelagic killing.

Until about the year 1886 there was no attempt on the part of any one to engage in sealing in violation of any rights granted to the company. Then a few sealers were fitted out in British Columbia, which entered Bering Sea and killed seals in the open ocean, of course without any discrimination as to sex. They were killed by the use of firearms, and many of them — some experts said a large proportion of them — sank and did not rise again. Mr. Bayard called the

attention of Lord Salisbury to the wanton destruction, and to the interest of Great Britain and the world in the preservation of this, the last important herd of fur-bearing seals. He received a sympathetic reply, and there seemed a good prospect of an arrangement by which the destructive practice should be prohibited. The government, Mr. Cleveland being then President, sent revenue cutters into Bering Sea to enforce what were assumed to be American rights, and some British sealers were captured, sent to American ports, and condemned, together with the sealskins taken by them. This was the situation at the time that the administration was changed and Mr. Blaine became Secretary of State.

It would be impossible, within reasonable limits, to give an adequate summary of the diplomatic correspondence on this subject in the years 1890 and 1891, between Mr. Blaine on the one side, and Lord Salisbury and Sir Julian Pauncefote on the other. It must be admitted, first, that on the exact technicalities of international law and usage the case of the United States was not perfect; secondly, that, even if there were no flaw in the reasoning, Great Britain could not be compelled to yield to the force of logic. It was a case in which, if Lord Salisbury should stand by the rights claimed by Cana-

dians, and should disregard the argument that the good of mankind required that the United States should continue to protect the seal herd from extermination, this country would ultimately fail to carry its point. The Marquis of Salisbury was himself at first inclined to agree to the American view of the matter. The operations of United States revenue cutters were, of course, irritating, but that difficulty was easily surmountable. Canada, however, was obdurate; and when Mr. Blaine argued for American rights, Lord Salisbury argued back, and the main point, that, whether there were or were not rights, good policy required a concession on the part of the British government, was too frequently forgotten.

It was a fine contest of wits. Mr. Blaine made the point that the destruction of the seal herd was *contra bonos mores*, and that Great Britain was interested directly in putting a stop to it. He urged that by the possession of the Pribilof Islands, where the seals resorted in countless numbers to bring forth and rear their young, the United States was virtually in possession of the herd. He held that the undisturbed monopoly enjoyed by Russia, which had ceded all its rights to the United States, gave this country a title to the monopoly akin to the title which in law is known as prescription. Lord Salisbury disputed

all these positions. He took the ground with reference to the last point that it was essentially a claim that the Bering Sea was *mare clausum*, a position which Mr. Blaine over and over again declared that he did not advance and did not hold. He admitted the absolute right of the maritime powers of the world to sail that sea for purposes of commerce or fishing. He claimed no more than a right which the United States equally with Great Britain had tacitly conceded to Russia so long as that country owned Alaska.

Lord Salisbury called attention to a protest by John Quincy Adams, when Secretary of State, against a ukase of the Tsar claiming jurisdiction over the Pacific Ocean to a distance of one hundred miles from the coast. Mr. Blaine insisted, and maintained that he proved absolutely, that the protest had no reference to Bering Sea, which was known as the North Sea, whereas the Pacific was called the South Sea, Long arguments ensued on this point, and neither contestant was convinced. Lord Salisbury made much of the rule of international law that the jurisdiction of a country ceases at a distance of three miles from the coast. Mr. Blaine retorted that Great Britain disregarded that rule at its own convenience, as in its assertion of control over the Ceylon pearl fishery, and by its prohibition of trawling in the North Sea between two points

of the Scottish coast, over an area twenty-seven hundred miles in extent. He could elicit no reply to this home thrust. The reply would doubtless be that Great Britain has always claimed that the line of jurisdiction does not follow the sinuosities of the coast but is drawn from headland to headland. But inasmuch as no other government has conceded that method of ascertaining the extent of jurisdiction, the claim is even less supported than that of Russia over the Bering Sea, which other powers did at least respect by refraining from trespass.

So far as Mr. Blaine's object in the correspondence was to convince the British foreign secretary that this government had a right to exclude unlicensed sealers, and by a police power over Bering Sea to capture and condemn them as poachers, his effort failed. But a *modus vivendi* was patched up, which was wholly ineffective during the single season it was in force, for there were more British sealers in the protected waters than ever before. Great Britain refused to renew the arrangement. Then a treaty was made under which the questions at issue were submitted to arbitration. The decision of the tribunal was adverse to the contentions of the United States; and an award of damages for the seizure of British sealers by American revenue cutters completed the defeat of the United

States in the diplomatic controversy. The depredations — if the word may be used to describe acts that were thus practically declared lawful — have continued, and the seal herd is so nearly extinct as hardly to be worth hunting.

Mr. Blaine did not confine his activities while Secretary of State strictly to the matters concerning his own department. One of those dramatic incidents of which so many marked his public career occurred during the consideration of the tariff bill of 1890. He intervened almost directly to prevent the sacrifice of the only weapon the government possessed to compel the countries of the American continents to open their markets on more favorable terms to the products of the United States. Already coffee, hides, and crude india rubber were free of duty. It was proposed in the McKinley bill as it was originally drawn, and as it passed the House of Representatives, to place sugar also on the free list. If that were to be done, substantially all the products of tropical America, except tobacco, would be admitted to the United States without the payment of duty, whereas the tariffs of all the countries of Central and South America were so drawn as to be highly disadvantageous to the United States. This country would then be placed in the same position with respect to them that Great Britain has accepted with respect to

the whole world, — a situation which led Mr. Chamberlain to propound his fiscal policy, in 1903, and to advise that the British government should resume the weapon of tariff retaliation.

Mr. Blaine alone of the public men of the time discerned the essential weakness of this policy. He saw that Congress was about to throw away a great opportunity to extend the export trade of the country. Public criticism of measures before Congress by officers of the executive branch of the government, and specific advice as to the amendment of such measures, are almost unknown in American political history, and are regarded as highly improper. No one knew this better than did Mr. Blaine, yet so earnest was he in his purpose to secure an entrance into the markets of Latin America that he ventured to do the unusual and the improper thing.

Early in June he sent to the President a report of the International American Conference, which recommended the negotiation of reciprocal commercial treaties between the United States and the other republics of America. Mr. Blaine accompanied the report with some extremely suggestive statistics, showing the insignificant amount of American produce taken by the countries of Latin America, and urged that the trade might be greatly increased by judicious amendment of

the pending tariff bill.[1] The President sent the paper of the Secretary of State to Congress with a special message, in which he commended generally the idea of using the special favors to be granted to the sister republics to secure favors from them in return, but did not echo Mr. Blaine's suggestion of amendment to the tariff bill. He did, in fact, go as far as it was proper for him to go in seconding Mr. Blaine's motion.[2] As soon as the message of the President had been read to the Senate, Mr. Hale, of Maine, introduced an amendment to the tariff bill embodying Mr. Blaine's views. It provided that the ports of the United States should be free "to all the products of any nation of the American hemisphere" which should levy no export duties on those products, and which should admit free of duty a specified list of American products. This plan ultimately proved impracticable, because it would have established free trade with Canada, and also because it would have made wool free of duty, neither of which measures was desired by the protectionists, or, probably, by Mr. Blaine himself.

The proposition in its general purpose, as well

[1] The bill had already been passed by the House of Representatives, on May 21.

[2] See his message of June 19, 1890. *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. ix., p. 74.

as in the form in which it was brought before the Senate, was not favorably received by senators. But Mr. Blaine was greatly in earnest, and practically appealed from the Senate to the people. In July he addressed a letter to his friend Senator Frye, of Maine, in which he expressed himself in the most vigorous manner upon what seemed to him the foolish neglect of a great opportunity. He made the point that the most effective because the most plausible argument against the protective system was "that its benefits go wholly to the manufacturer and the capitalist and not at all to the farmer." Then he proceeded: "Here is an opportunity where the farmer may be benefited — primarily, undeniably, richly benefited. Here is an opportunity for a Republican Congress to open the markets of forty millions of people to the products of American farms. Shall we seize the opportunity, or shall we throw it away? I do not doubt that in many respects the tariff bill pending in the Senate is a just measure, and that most of its provisions are in accordance with the wise policy of protection. But there is not a section or a line in the entire bill that will open the market for another bushel of wheat or another barrel of pork."

The letter was intended to be read by people throughout the country, and it was read by them.

The idea pleased the farmers everywhere. It soon became evident that the scheme was too popular to be rejected, and ultimately the "reciprocity" section of the McKinley act was adopted. It provided that although sugar, coffee, tea, and hides were to be free of duty, a duty should be imposed upon such articles when entering an American port from any country which maintained a tariff upon American goods which, in the opinion of the President, was "unequal and unreasonable." A story crept into the newspapers and is even repeated by Gail Hamilton, that Mr. Blaine appeared before the Finance Committee of the Senate and urged his reciprocity measure with such vehemence that he smashed his hat in making one of his vigorous gestures. There is the best of authority for saying that Mr. Blaine did not address the Finance Committee on the subject at any time. On one occasion he did express himself informally — but energetically — to some senators in the room of the Appropriations Committee, when the committee was not in session, and accidentally struck his hat; and the newspaper correspondents invented the rest of the story.

Many agreements were made with foreign governments under the reciprocity provisions of the McKinley act. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that many such governments

greatly reduced their tariffs on American goods in order to avoid the penalty of a duty on their own produce. In some cases their imports from the United States were increased largely. In other cases little or no benefit to this country ensued. But in truth the scheme was not fairly tried. Less than a year after the conclusion of the second of the so-called reciprocity treaties, the success of the Democrats at the presidential election of 1892 sealed the doom of the policy. They had denounced the system as a "sham," were expected to discontinue it, and did so. Statistics, often and often adduced to show the failure of the policy, prove nothing. The arrangements with the countries of Central and South America made many agricultural and manufactured goods free of duty, and reduced the duty on many other such goods from one quarter to one half. It surely requires more than an exhibit of commercial tables showing that in many, even in most, cases American exports to those countries did not increase during the two or three years the arrangements were in force, to demonstrate that the policy would not have been of great advantage to the trade of this country. Who, for example, would venture to maintain that an agreement by Brazil to admit American cotton goods at seventy-five per cent. of the duty charged on English, French,

and German piece goods, would be worthless to American manufacturers, and to their employés?

The opposition to the "treaties" was purely political, and had no other basis than the fact that the arrangement for an increase of the export trade interfered in no way whatever with the protection to American industry which it was one of the avowed purposes of the McKinley act to secure.

XI

THE LAST YEARS

In the conduct of the foreign affairs of the country, both in the matters mentioned and in other less important and less perplexing business, the Secretary of State seems to have had the full support of the President. If any differences of opinion between them occurred, the grave has closed over them and they will never be revealed. But it is necessary to consider, in a spirit of charity to both, their personal relations to each other, which ended in alienation, and in the abrupt termination of Mr. Blaine's public life.

The position of Mr. Blaine in the cabinet of General Harrison was from the beginning quite different from that which he had occupied under President Garfield. In the one case the two men, President and Secretary, were bosom friends. Blaine was free — if the relations between them had not been what they were, one would almost say too free — with his advice. Garfield relied much on his Secretary of State, saw questions with his eyes, adopted his measures, appointed to office the men whom he selected. Harrison was built upon a different model. It is not neces-

sary to suppose, and it would not be reasonable to suppose, that his attitude toward Blaine was ever such that the word jealousy describes it. Nor would it be fair even to suggest that in any of his acts or omissions anything like a purpose to let Blaine "know his place" actuated him. The mention of these suggestions here is made simply because they have been put forward by some of the too sensitive friends of Blaine, and because they were used during the whole of Harrison's administration by mischief-makers who were endeavoring to embroil the two men and to drive Blaine from the cabinet.

It is certain that Blaine never expected to wield in Harrison's official family the influence he had exerted in Garfield's. Yet in all probability he did expect more than he received. Harrison evidently meant to be President and to have the decision in all matters which he desired to decide. In a great many cases he rejected Blaine's selections for offices in his own department. The most conspicuous example, although by no means the most important, was the rejection of Blaine's heart's desire, the appointment of his son Walker as Assistant Secretary of State. Nevertheless the President did make the young man Solicitor for the Department of State, and thus Walker was enabled to be at his father's right hand.

No complaint came from Mr. Blaine that he was unfairly treated or that his position was humiliating. He was forced to tell those who solicited his influence to obtain positions, that he did not possess such influence, and in many cases he defended the action of the President. For he explained that, owing to his own long prominence in public life and the devotion of his friends, hosts of persons felt that they had claims upon him; but that it was not reasonable to expect that President Harrison would pay Secretary Blaine's political debts. In short, the situation was accepted by both, without apology on the part of the one, without grievance on the part of the other. Such a condition of affairs might have continued to the end of the administration but for certain untoward events.

In the summer of 1889 the President visited Maine and was the guest of Mr. Blaine at Bar Harbor. Their personal relations were most cordial, but the busybodies of the hostile press, whose omniscience usually presents itself in the form of mind-reading, had already begun to represent the case otherwise. The President was jealous, some of them intimated, of Blaine's prominence as a leader, and was inclined to snub him. Blaine chafed, reported others, under the humiliation put upon him. The truth was suggested by Mr. Blaine himself, to the present

writer, who visited him a few days afterward, when he said that those who told such tales should have seen the President and himself in their familiar intercourse, during those days of General Harrison's visit.

A few months later two exceedingly heavy blows fell upon Mr. Blaine in quick succession, and wounded him in the tenderest spot. On the 15th of January, 1890, his oldest and his beloved son Walker died, after an illness of five days. Precisely a fortnight later his oldest daughter Alice, Mrs. Coppinger, was stricken, and she too died on the 2d of February. Those only who knew the height and depth of the father's love for his children, and his pride in the young man who gave promise of a brilliant public career can measure his grief. He sought relief in hard work, but the world was greatly changed. He had known defeat and disappointment; now tragedy entered into his life.

It is impossible — it would be improper even if it were possible — to trace to causes and to particular incidents the gradual change in the attitude of the President and the Secretary toward each other. But it may not be unfair to Mr. Blaine's memory to suggest that he became less and less the confidential friend and ready adviser of the President, and more and more the cool and distant official, as his bodily powers

failed, and that the two changes stood to each other in the relation of effect and cause. It may not be unfair to the President to suggest that the alteration of his Secretary's demeanor seemed a confirmation of the malign insinuations of men who were really friendly to neither but were persistently hostile to Blaine, that the Secretary was at heart disloyal to his chief. Much was made at the time of an incident — a request for a certain appointment which General Harrison positively refused to make — as the true cause of the final breach between the two men. Into the circumstances of that affair it is not necessary or expedient to enter. It may be said that the request was one that might properly be made, and that the President had strong, and, to himself, sufficient reasons for his refusal to grant it. Although it did constitute a personal, a family grievance, the alienation had begun before the incident occurred, and the breaking off of official and personal relations did not take place until some time afterward. Therefore it is evident that too great importance has been attached to it as a cause of the breach.

Mr. Blaine's health was undermined. His long years of hard work and of harassing conflict had told upon him. The erect form was bowed, the once full face and brilliant eye showed signs of premature age. His intellectual powers

exhibited no symptoms of declining, but there was an indefinable change in him which more and more affected his judgment. It now became unfortunate that he had all his life been accustomed to resolve upon his own course of conduct and to act upon his resolution, sure that he was right although his friends might advise him to adopt a different course. As his power to forecast results gradually diminished, the results of error became more injurious. Had he been the man he was even at the beginning of his second term as Secretary of State, the melancholy events of the last year of his life could not have occurred.

Another presidential canvass approached. Many influential Republicans besought him to become a candidate once more. Whatever may afterward have been his wish, his purpose in the winter and spring of 1892 was inflexibly against accepting a nomination. As early as February 6 in that year he wrote to the chairman of the Republican National Committee that he was not a candidate and that his name would not go before the convention. Several months later, within a month of his abrupt resignation of his office, he said to the present writer, in the privacy of his own home, — not to a politician but to a personal friend, "The truth is, I do not want that office. When the American people choose a

President they require him to remain awake four years. I have come to a time of life when I need my sleep. Now," he added, "I like my present office. I enjoy it and would like to continue in it."

An incident which occurred about this time shows both his deplorable physical state and the way in which that condition affected his mind. At a cabinet meeting he rose suddenly from his seat and left the room. The President and Blaine's colleagues, who had half anticipated a breach, fancied that Blaine had taken sudden offence or a sudden resolution, and looked at one another a moment in silence. Then Mr. Elkins, the Secretary of War, a lifelong friend of Blaine, followed him to ascertain the cause of his abrupt departure. He found that Blaine was taken ill and was on the point of collapse. He took him home in his carriage. On the way Blaine, who thought he was at the point of death, requested Elkins to assure the President of his confidence, and of his wish that he should be nominated for another term. But he recovered, and unfortunately, in his weak state, he fell, so far as a man of his stamp could fall, under the influence of others than the old friends and staunch supporters who had stood by him in prosperity and adversity, when he was assailed by calumny as well as when he re-

ceived the adulations of great throngs of admirers.

On the 4th of June, 1892, James G. Blaine sent to the President a brief note, couched in the most formal language, resigning the office of Secretary of State. There was not in it a word of explanation, nor a word of regret, nor a word of allusion to past or present personal relations between himself and the President. The reply of General Harrison, in which he accepted the resignation, was equally cold and formal. The most ardent friend of Mr. Blaine would find it difficult to assign a reason why it should have been otherwise, why the President should have been in the least degree effusive when Mr. Blaine was not. It must be that both men were conscious that these two curt notes marked the end of a long and most brilliant career. We have all seen upon the stage plays in which the most stirring passions of the human heart were represented in strong action and in excited, even violent language; but when the curtain falls on the last act it hides from view the solitary, silent, motionless figure of the hero of the drama. May we not liken the close of Mr. Blaine's public life, marked by many a startling and spectacular scene, to the end of such a play, where silence adds intensity to the dramatic power of the situation? No other public man in American history quitted the stage

as he did. There have been cabinet ministers who were abruptly dismissed; and scores of others have resigned for one cause or another. In no other case, when questions of public policy were in no wise involved, has a secretary offered his resignation with such curtness of phrase or seen his retirement acquiesced in without a word of personal or official regret.

The 4th of June fell on Saturday. The Republican National Convention was to meet on Tuesday, the 7th. Mr. Blaine left Washington at once for Maine, but did not proceed there directly. He made a stop in Boston and there, at a hotel, watched the proceedings of the convention with the utmost eagerness. So far as is known, no communication whatever passed between him and any of those who at any time had been his confidential political managers. His son Emmons, who was present at Minneapolis as an interested observer of events, was unable to ascertain what were his father's wishes. In fact, no one knew then or will ever know the explanation of his conduct. His resignation, his excited observation of the proceedings, and his silence when he knew that, in spite of his prohibition, his name was to be presented, all suggest that he had changed his mind and desired the nomination. On the other hand his principle that he would not run again unless the sponta-

neous, unanimous choice of the convention; his repugnance for the office, so frankly and frequently expressed not long before, and his consciousness — for he must have been conscious of it — of the failure of his powers, — all these indicate that his overpowering interest in what was going on at Minneapolis did not imply such a change of purpose. For the first time in his life, in such a crisis, he did not declare his purpose, and what he thought and wished will never be known.

We shall not be far out of the way if we attribute his vagaries to the same cause that led to his alienation from the President, his physical condition. One who was a close associate of Mr. Blaine during more than fifteen years of his public life assures the writer that at this period he was subject to temporary delusions. On more than one occasion Mr. Blaine described to him scenes in which the President and himself were supposed to have been the actors, which could never have occurred, and which the Blaine of former times could never even have imagined. It was on this subject only that his mind was affected by delusions. In regard to everything else his intellect was as keen as ever. Indeed, no one save a few confidential friends, perhaps no member of his own family, was aware of this manifestation of the progress of mortal disease.

General Harrison was nominated for reëlection on the first roll-call. He had almost three times as many votes as were given for Blaine, who received barely one sixth of a vote more than did Major McKinley. Blaine dictated a brief but stirring appeal to Republicans to close up the ranks and unite in an earnest support of the ticket, and resumed his journey to Bar Harbor. He did not telegraph congratulations to Harrison. The omission was noted as evidence of his deep dissatisfaction with the action of the convention.

Hardly had he reached his summer home when another crushing blow fell upon him. His son Emmons, the only survivor of his older children, who had been prominent in the proceedings at Minneapolis, full of life and vigor, was taken suddenly ill, and died on the 18th of June, only a week after the close of the convention. The first intelligence his parents had of his illness was contained in the telegram announcing his death. Mr. Blaine's life was bound up in his two manly sons. The death of Walker was like cutting off his right hand; but Emmons did his best to fill the place of two sons. He was one of the most lovable of men, and his untimely death bereaved not only his parents but a young wife also, and left his infant son an orphan. In the face of such a grievous affliction partisan ani-

mosity was forgotten. The Democratic National Convention, which was in session at the time of Emmons Blaine's death, paused in its proceedings to pass a resolution of sympathy with the old antagonist of the party.

The summer and autumn of 1892 were passed for the most part at Bar Harbor. Mr. Blaine's share in the canvass of that year was not conspicuous, but he did all that his growing feebleness permitted. He wrote a strong letter for publication, setting forth the three great issues, as he regarded them, of the campaign, — tariff, reciprocity, and a sound currency. On the 14th of October he made his only speech during the campaign, and the last public speech he ever delivered, at Ophir Farm, in Westchester County, New York, the country residence of the Hon. Whitelaw Reid, the Republican candidate for Vice President. There was a great outpouring of the people from all the surrounding country, including many uniformed political clubs. After a dinner given in his honor by Mr. Reid, with a notable gathering of prominent men as his fellow guests, there was a serenade, and then a speech by Blaine. It was brief, but the applause of the assembled company at his appearance, and during and after his address, proved how strong a hold he had upon the affections of the people of that neighborhood, — an experience which would

have been repeated in almost any county of any state in the Union. The only other act of participation in the canvass was the preparation of an article on the political situation for the "North American Review," for November, 1892. In letter, speech, and magazine article the method was the method of the Blaine who had been editor, congressman, speaker, senator, campaign orator, presidential candidate, and Secretary of State. If one detects a lack of the terse vigor of his utterances in the days of his greatest mental power, let us not forget with what desperate earnestness, with what effort to overcome physical weakness, with what anguish of personal bereavement, he was striving to fill his old place, and to drive away the dread enemy who was soon to conquer, as he conquers us all.

Back to Washington, and for the last time. A winter to be passed in southern California was planned, but the plan was not to be realized. Mr. Blaine was very feeble, but he did not, as in the days of his strength, succumb to slight ailments. On the Sunday before election he attended the Church of the Covenant, partook of the communion, and walked home in company with President Harrison. If there had been antagonism between them it had disappeared, and they were again on the friendliest terms with each other. Soon afterward Mr. Blaine

caught a severe cold, took to his bed, and from that time until the end came, the complication of disorders that had previously been sapping his vitality slowly made rapid progress. The nation was an interested watcher by the bedside of the sufferer. A corps of newspaper correspondents kept vigil night and day within sight of his residence on Lafayette Square, to catch the slightest intelligence regarding his condition. Those last days were days of quiet, peaceful, cheerful resignation. He had several attacks of great weakness from which he rallied each time with diminishing vitality. He breathed his last, surrounded by all the members of his family, in the forenoon of January 27, 1893, within four days of completing his sixty-third year.

His death was recognized as a national event. The President issued a proclamation announcing it, in which he said that Mr. Blaine's "devotion to the public interests, his marked ability, and his exalted patriotism have won for him the gratitude and affection of his countrymen and the admiration of the world. In the various pursuits of legislation, diplomacy, and literature his genius has added new lustre to American citizenship." He directed that all the departments of the executive branch of the government should be closed on the day of the funeral. The ceremony was private, in the sense that it was con-

ducted wholly by friends of the family, that no official or other delegations were present, and that there was a complete absence of pomp or display. But the Church of the Covenant, where the exercises took place, was thronged by a distinguished company of Mr. Blaine's friends and political associates, including the President, all the members of his cabinet, and many members of both Houses of Congress. The open space in front of the church was filled by thousands of men and women who waited, silent and respectful, during the ceremonies, watched the procession as it took its slow way to the burial, and then mournfully dispersed. The body of the dead statesman was laid to rest, beside those of his son Walker and his daughter Alice, in the family burial lot in Oak Hill Cemetery on Georgetown Heights.

XII

THE MAN AND THE STATESMAN

Distance in time is needed to give such perspective as will enable the biographer to assign to a public man his true place in history, and to represent him in correct proportions and magnitude as compared with other men, his predecessors and contemporaries. Whatever, therefore, may be said here as to Mr. Blaine's influence upon the politics of his time and the history of his country — its extent, its quality, and its durability — must be read with all allowance for the fact that at the time it is written little more than a decade has elapsed since his death.

But a man himself may be pictured even during his lifetime, truly in respect of his outward form and appearance, less accurately in respect of his mental traits, his character, aims, motives, and methods. When one has to deal with a personage over whom controversy raged as it did over Blaine, almost every man's view will be distorted. His adherents exaggerate his virtues and powers no less than those who take another view of his character magnify every fault, and even discover some faults that others cannot per-

ceive. Death does not close the controversies regarding such a man. Nevertheless, the material facts upon which a sure judgment may be based are more abundant and accessible as soon as the life has ended than they are afterward; and consequently a truer estimate of the man, apart from his service and achievement, may then be made by one who is able to divest himself of partisanship, than at any subsequent period. It would be uncandid on the part of the present writer were he to pretend that he possesses the impartiality and the passionless judgment that qualify him to make the final estimate of this man and of his career. Such bias as a lifelong friendship, sometimes amounting to intimacy, necessarily gives, must be frankly admitted. There are, nevertheless, many things to be said of him before we begin to reach any subjects of controversy.

First of all as to the man himself, apart from his public life. By no means puritanical or austere in his habits, his private life was not merely free from blame but was conspicuously pure and clean. Neither the great nor the little vices to which public men too often succumb in the whirl and excitement of Washington society, offered any temptation to him. His house was his home not less at the national capital than it was at Augusta. He was not a club man; he had

no taste for what is known as conviviality. He never used tobacco. Until the later years of his life he rarely tasted wine, and even then he tasted rather than drank it. These facts are mentioned not as implying self-denial and self-control, for his abstinence implied nothing of the sort. But they do exhibit a man who never sought in narcotics or intoxicants relief from the tremendous strain to which for many years he was subjected.

He was domestic in his habits to an extraordinary degree, was never so happy or so exuberant in his spirits as when he was with his family, of which he was the adored and the adoring head, and was attached to all of his own and Mrs. Blaine's relatives, from the grandfathers to the infants in arms. In the other relations in which one judges of a man as a member of a social community he was not less irreproachable. No man was a kinder neighbor than he, or more helpful and sympathetic toward all with whom he was brought in contact. He was a liberal giver to charities, a generous supporter of the churches he attended, a buyer who did not bargain, a prompt payer of his debts. In early manhood he became a member of the Congregational Church in Augusta, and his name was borne on its rolls as of one in good standing, to the end of his life. His religion was not flaunted

in the faces of those who conversed with him, but it was deep and sincere.

As to the charm of his personality there is no dispute. Physically stalwart and well proportioned, having a large head set upon broad shoulders, and prominent features dominated by brilliant and piercing eyes, he had a presence that could never fail to attract attention to himself in any company. The "magnetism" about which so much has been said, and which was felt as soon as one took his hand or heard his voice, is indefinable, and comes no one knows whence. Many a man who could never have been persuaded to vote for him fell under the spell of it at the first meeting. It was not the acquired art of the politician, establishing a bond between himself and those who might be useful to him, great as was the accession of popularity which he owed to his singular power over men. For it was his nature to be drawn toward every man and woman whom he met, and to make friends with them. He would enter into the interests of a boy, hold him by the hand, and question him about his school and his studies, as readily as he would attach a political magnate to his fortunes, and with as much or as little afterthought as to the consequences in the one case as in the other. It was simply his habit to be friendly with everybody, and his hunger for friendship was satis

fied by his wonderful faculty for making friends. There are two or three instances — hardly more — of his having cherished animosity. In each case he had received injuries that the most amiable man could not forgive. But there were many other instances of his having overlooked offences that to an ordinary observer seem quite as great as those, and of his having come to terms of intimate friendship with the offenders. It would be difficult to name the public man of whom so much evil has been spoken who spoke so little evil of others.

It is not so easy to account for the affection he inspired in persons who never even saw him, as it is to understand his power over those who knew him. His magnetic field extended far beyond his personal acquaintance, beyond those whom the sound of his voice could reach. To those who never were affected by it, still more to the generations that are to come, the language that might be used to describe his almost magical influence will seem extravagant and fanciful. But how can any one explain the frenzy of the enthusiasm manifested on many occasions, when the name of Blaine was shouted by thousands of men who had never seen him? There was in their acclamation a note of personal affection and devotion that is missing from the chord when one is greeted who is merely an admired political leader.

But he was also a trusted as well as a beloved leader, and had many and rare gifts for such a station : a thorough groundwork of education in the broad sense; an intimate acquaintance with the history of the government of his country, perhaps unsurpassed by that of any man of his time; a memory stored with all the material necessary to a statesman, — minute, accurate, and ever ready to yield its treasures; and a quick and sure perception as to the effect of a measure not only upon public opinion but in its larger and remoter consequences. These furnished him his stock in trade; and a facility and felicity of utterance, and resourcefulness in debate, most unusual even among the practised orators who were his associates in public life, made him, whether on the stump or in any body of which he was a member, a speaker to whom it was impossible not to listen, a leader who was sure of a multitude of followers.

His quickness at repartee and his aptness at finding and exposing the weak point in an adversary's argument gave intellectual pleasure to those who heard him in debate. His detractors used to say that Blaine was "too smart," which was a compliment to his skill as a dialectician, although they did not so intend it. For whereas, in urging a measure which he wished to promote, he was accustomed to rest his argument on broad,

fundamental principles, when opposing measures he was frequently able to divert discussion to collateral and unimportant issues. Thus, particularly when contending with a majority sure to outvote him, he could disconcert his opponents by a bold attack upon a point not strictly relevant, and thus score a personal victory.

Blaine's ability to feel the public pulse did not tempt him to be shifty and uncertain in his political course. In all essential matters he was consistent from the beginning to the end of his career. Slavery was the grand issue before the country when he came upon the political stage. He opposed slavery and the system associated with the institution, to the last. After emancipation he espoused and upheld the policies which the extinction of slavery seemed to him logically to demand. Mistaken or not, he approved the military reconstruction of the seceded states, and the grant of the right of suffrage to the freedmen. He disapproved and condemned the abandonment of the Southern Republicans, white and black. He held and never ceased to hold that the rights conferred upon the emancipated negroes should be maintained by the power which gave them. Yet he was never a hater of the South. He withstood Thaddeus Stevens, who wished to punish the "rebels," and who proposed to drag them back into the Union and to keep them out

at the same time. Not at any time a radical, he always insisted that loyalty and an acceptance of the principles and policies resulting from the civil war were an essential condition, if the South was to be "let alone."

Again, Blaine was a tariff man, — a follower of Henry Clay and a believer in the "American system" from boyhood. From that faith he never wavered. Here also, although consistent to the last, he was no radical. He believed that excessive protection was unreasonable and harmful, and that it weakened the defensive position of the adherents of the system. Once, when he was Speaker, he abandoned the tariff to its enemies, temporarily, by appointing a majority of tariff reformers to the Committee of Ways and Means. It was a perilous act, and drew upon Blaine the denunciation of the extremists. But it probably resulted in a postponement for many years of the revulsion which finally manifested itself in the elections of 1890 and 1892. In hundreds of speeches in political campaigns, and at every period of his life when the occasion presented itself, he showed himself to be a stanch protectionist. His name would be included among the most conspicuous of the defenders of the system were there no other service to his credit than his "Paris message" of 1887; and his devotion to the twin policy of reciprocity was strikingly ex-

hibited in his vigorous intervention in behalf of it when the McKinley bill was pending.

No question was more important during the whole of Mr. Blaine's public life than that of the currency. It arose in various forms out of the financial demoralization of the civil war period. Here again, from first to last, he favored a rigid observance of the obligations of the government to its creditors and the maintenance of an unimpaired standard of value. His was the first voice raised in Congress against the heresy that the five-twenty bonds might be paid with greenbacks, — that an interest-bearing debt might be discharged by tendering to the holders of it irredeemable, non-interest-bearing promises to pay. He opposed inflation of the paper currency, stood by the law for the resumption of specie payments, and contended against the remonetization of the "dollar of the fathers." It is true he favored, even in 1878, the free coinage of silver at a ratio with gold which he thought would bring to parity with each other the bullion value of the gold and the silver dollar. He was troubled by a constitutional objection to the disuse of either gold or silver as money. That objection does not count for much to-day. Indeed, one finds it not easy to follow the reasoning which converts a prohibition upon the states to make anything but gold and silver a legal tender, into

a compulsory precept upon the general government to coin both metals. Nevertheless, many men who believed themselves to be unflinching advocates of "honest money" then held the opinion that neither metal could be constitutionally demonetized. If Mr. Blaine faltered when that question of silver was pending, in the hope of finding a compromise that would satisfy both parties and injure neither debtors nor creditors, it was the only occasion when his attitude was inconsistent with that which he assumed when he first attacked the five-twenty bond theory of Stevens, Butler, and Pendleton.

The catalogue of political and economic questions on which Blaine's course was consistent throughout might be greatly extended. It would include many topics on which, as on the tariff, and to a less extent on the currency, he found strong opponents in his own party. To mention one only, he always favored building up a mercantile marine by means of subsidies to American-built ships. To do so seemed to him a necessary part of any system for extending the commerce of the United States. His attitude upon this question is referred to as an illustration of the fact that whenever there was an opportunity to manifest national selfishness, which is the essential quality of patriotism, he showed himself a firm believer in his own country and a stout de-

fender of it. In saying this there is not the least intention to imply that those who took another view of this or any other question were less patriotic than he, or that they were less ready to defend the country. Their minds worked differently. They favored different policies.

Two or three examples of his activity in behalf of an expansion of American influence in the world, where he did not enjoy the united support even of his own party, will show the difference here indicated. As Secretary of State, Blaine endeavored to free the country from the entanglement of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty with England; he tried to vindicate the right of the United States to a monopoly of the Bering Sea seal fishery; he was strongly in favor of an American continental system, of which the United States should be the benevolent and pacific leader; from early manhood he favored the acquisition of Hawaii. No one would urge that dissent from either of these propositions was unpatriotic. Indeed indifference to them all was in accordance with the traditional attitude of American patriots, who held that this country should concern itself with the affairs of other nations only when compelled to do so. Mr. Blaine's position on these questions was based upon a different theory. It was that which is now denominated imperialist by those who call

themselves anti-imperialists. Earlier than most American public men he felt, and more boldly than others he expressed the opinion, that the time had come to abandon the isolation, and the hermit-like apathy to what was going on in the world outside, which had from the beginning been the policy of the government. The great change that has taken place since the close of Blaine's public life will be seen, if we suggest that what he said and wrote tending in the direction of national expansion, national self-assertion, national participation in world-politics, vigorous as it was, and greatly as it was in advance of the time, if said or written by a public man to-day, would hardly draw upon him denunciation as a "jingo." So Hamilton was far in advance of his time in his measures for consolidating the Union; to-day there is no school of political thought in America that does not go far beyond Hamilton in acceptance of the national idea.

It would be unfair to those who criticised and opposed Blaine to create the impression that their objection was in all cases to the policies and measures which he advocated. Many of them found fault with his methods, and with the manner in which as Secretary of State he handled subjects, when he was the official spokesman of the government. There was not a little

justice in their criticisms. It cannot be denied that Blaine was irritating as a controversialist, and sometimes lacking in good judgment. In diplomacy, patience, and courtesy both of tone and of language, are usual and expedient. The sharp, biting phrases that are used in political discussion and in parliamentary debate, when the speaker neither hopes nor fears for the result of the vote that is to follow, effect little in a diplomatic despatch. One who reads the Bering Sea correspondence must admire the dialectic skill of Mr. Blaine, and yet feel all the while that he was hurting his cause by being, in the phrase of his critics, "too smart." The object to be aimed at was not to convince Lord Salisbury that he was wrong in his interpretation of international law, and ignorant of the history of the seal fishery, but to persuade him that the interests of his own country and the world would be advanced by the conclusion of an agreement that would result in the protection of the seal herd from extermination. This was perhaps the most conspicuous instance of Blaine's failure in tact as a diplomatist, although it was not that which brought upon him the most violent criticism.

Mr. Blaine was prominent in public affairs during almost a generation. For fully half that time he was the most prominent member of his

own party, and exercised a greater power over the minds and thoughts of his countrymen than was wielded by any other person. Was his influence permanent or transitory? Is his name to be enrolled among the demigods of American history, or was his power of such a nature that it will become evanescent as the memory of his personal magnetism fades away?

To answer these questions we must look further and deeper than at the facts that lie upon the surface: on the one hand, beyond his brilliant qualities of mind, beyond his long service in conspicuous positions, beyond the circumstance of his extraordinary reputation during his lifetime and the enthusiastic admiration that was felt for him; on the other hand, beyond the admitted fact that, although every great political question at issue between parties during his public life has been settled, save only the perennial question of the tariff, his name is inseparably connected with not one of them.

It is true that his enduring fame is not to be sought in the domain of legislation. Although he served in both branches of Congress nearly eighteen years in all, he was never in a position to exert a strong influence as a leader in affirmative legislation. He had barely ceased to be regarded as a junior member of the House of Representatives when he was chosen Speaker.

In that capacity he exercised great power in defeating unwise measures, but was virtually precluded from devising and initiating legislation. As a member of the minority, after his term as Speaker closed, he was hardly more nearly powerless as a constructive statesman than he was as a newcomer in the Senate, where seniority counts for much. But after all, the test of greatness and of political immortality which is suggested by these considerations is essentially superficial. Judged by it alone, even so illustrious a name as that of Webster would be struck from the roll.

Blaine's influence during his lifetime, and that which remains, was of a broader and more far-reaching character than can be measured by a consideration of the public acts in which he bore a part. It was an influence upon the general tendency of the political thought of his countrymen. It easily escapes observation because, when the tendency has once been established, the movement is progressive, and men are too busy to stop and inquire whence came the impulse in the new direction. His real work in politics began when he took the office of Secretary of State. He had won the respect and admiration of millions in his own party, and was accepted as a leader and an oracle. Consequently when he led the way in the movement

which has changed completely the relation of the United States to the rest of the world, he had an army of followers. They took up with his ideas, developed them, and followed them to their logical conclusion.

Let us remember that from early manhood he was a firm and outspoken believer in the great destiny of his country. So, to be sure, were many others, most, indeed, of the patriots of all times. But he was also, as has been pointed out, the first Secretary of State to form and carry out a definite general forward policy which implied the right of the United States to a position of leadership among nations. We may say, to illustrate his position, that he was the first Secretary to adopt actively the principle that the Monroe Doctrine confers privileges upon the United States, as much as it imposes obligations. That his departure from the traditional policy was deemed rash and unwise by many most estimable men, that a Republican administration reversed and cancelled his policy, that when, having had another opportunity, he returned to it, he thereby exposed himself to criticism and obloquy as having needlessly ventured upon a course that might embroil the United States with other powers — all this may be admitted. Yet the very opposition which he encountered and the savage assaults upon his management

of the foreign affairs only served to strengthen him with those who followed because he led, and to make more intense the national sentiment of which he was the champion. When he retired from office, the work of moulding public opinion had proceeded so far that it has never been undone. The confidence which his leadership inspired, and the enlarged view which his policy gave to the people of the land, prepared them for the radical departure from the ways of the fathers which resulted from the war to make Cuba free in 1898.

No one would venture to assert that the people of the United States would not have consented to the expansion beyond seas and to a colonial system if James G. Blaine had never been Secretary of State. Nor could it be safely asserted that there would not have been a great popular uprising in the North in defence of the Union in 1861, if Webster had never pronounced his great reply to Hayne. The philosophical historian long ago recognized the irresistible effect of Webster's sonorous periods, declaimed from every school platform, instilling into the minds of successive generations the conviction that this is an enduring, indestructible nation, and not a loosely-bound federation of semi-sovereign states. When the time is ripe for the inquiry how the public sentiment of the American peo-

ple was led to accept joyfully and enthusiastically the functions, duties, and obligations resulting from expansion beyond the continental limits, it will be found that the first and strongest impulse in that direction was due to the national self-assertion contained in Mr. Blaine's diplomatic correspondence and action.

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